SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES
The Authorised Biography

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Acknowledgements

A huge debt of thanks to Sioux, Severin and Budgie, all of whom endured some persistent questioning with an enthusiasm way beyond the call of duty. Their attention to detail, and their willingness to talk frankly, made my life easier and the book an honest and revealing document.

To all those friends, musicians and contemporaries who gave up their time to celebrate, commemorate, enlighten and, in some cases, relive difficult moments in their lives.

To Doug Hart, who introduced me to the project, opened many doors and provided a solid rock of support throughout. Gravitas!

To Iain MacGregor, who commissioned the book and managed to find that little bit of extra time when it mattered. And to Chris Harvey, Jess Bamford, Laura Brudenell and Yvonne Worth at Sanctuary.

A special thanks to Alexis Petridis, who kindly donated his Robert Smith interview, thus plugging an obvious hole in the book's narrative.

To Bernard MacMahon, Alessandra and Pat Gilbert, all of whom lent support at various times.

Muchos besos para Zulema Gonzalez, who has finally learnt how to pronounce 'Siouxsie' with a silent 'x'.

To Erika, Norman and Julie-Anne, all of whom were there back in 1978 when Bansheemania first hit Bournemouth. And, of course, to Sarah Wilford, always the South Coast's most convincing Voodoo Dolly!

Foreword

I was 14, at a girlfriend's house and she put on this single, 'Happy House'. I can remember thinking, 'What the fuck is this?' I'd not heard anything like it. And the B-side, 'Drop Dead-Celebration', encapsulated every single thing that I felt at that time as a totally inarticulate, podgy, pasty, unempowered child. I became addicted. I bought the record and played it obsessively.

At the time, I had no idea what she or the band looked like. The voice and the music were enough. But when I saw how she looked, I was hopelessly seduced. No woman I'd ever seen looked like that. She was one of the first to project a really powerful image of womanhood. There had been a lot of protest singers, but their music never resonated with me. I got into Patti Smith at around the same time, but Siouxsie Sioux was the one I connected with immediately. You never got the feeling that she was anybody's victim or anybody's whore. She was my girl, and has been ever since.

Because I didn't get pocket money, I had to pilfer money so I could buy *The Scream*. A few obsessive months later, I bought *Kaleidoscope*. They were my two mainstays and I learned how to sing listening to those records. So many of the songs on those two albums were massive loves of my life. When I heard 'Suburban Relapse', I could see pictures. The band captured my imagination and dramatised my teenage life. And then I heard 'Christine'. That was my song. I, too, was the girl with the multiple personalities.

I totally bought into Siouxsie's image, but there was one frustration: I was a redhead. Siouxsie proved all the more alluring for the simple reason that I could never really get there. I used to pore over photographs, take long slavish hours trying to reconstruct the eye make-up and I crimped my hair. My friend and I would pretend to be Siouxsie Sioux and it was a fucking amazing feeling. The hair, the make-up, the jewellery, the fierceness! She was like a warrior who made me feel like a woman who could do anything she wanted to, and that feeling has remained with me ever since.

It's frustrating because I don't think she's ever really been given her due. She is the greatest punk icon ever, more so because she's always done it differently than the men. Musically, too, the Banshees were disobedient and sounded like no one else. When magazines put together these ridiculous lists of the greatest punk records ever, I find it laughable. Where are the Banshees? Siouxsie's an articulate, feral force and that frightens people. And so they shy away from giving her the praise that she deserves.

When I first saw the Banshees, at the Edinburgh Playhouse on 27 February 1981, I was mesmerised. They played 'Israel', which hadn't long been out, and I almost fainted. It was total pleasure. I'd dressed up in my redheaded interpretation of Siouxsie Sioux – fishnet tights, little brown boots and a short mini-kilt with an orange cashmere sweater. I couldn't get my hands on the cool stuff that she wore, so I did what I could. It's that press shot of her wearing the 'Israel' T-shirt with her fingers sticking out that's the one that stays with me. I pored over that.

A little later, the press began to describe them as a goth band. I never thought of them as goth. Goth has never been particularly angry, just a little dismayed. It always had a weak, submissive side to it. Siouxsie And The Banshees always had a real edge to what they did. There was so much articulated spite, humour and politics with a small 'p' there that I never felt they went down that simple, gloomy path. People try to pass them off as a goth band because they find them dangerous and don't understand them.

Today, I can see and hear the Banshees' influence all over the place. What they were doing twenty five years ago still sounds vital, and Siouxsie remains an incredibly powerful role model. Garbage were touring at the same time the Banshees were doing their reunion shows, and though our fans come from a different generation, I found out that many of them were also going to see the Banshees. When they played Edinburgh, my mum called me and said, 'Siouxsie Sioux was here last night and I've cut out the picture for you!' She knows all the songs. I think my whole family does.

She shaped my life. I wouldn't be singing if it weren't for Siouxsie. I got to do what she did because she did it first and she did it so much better. I could weep whenever I think about her. I'm not in her league. She allows me – and all the rest of us – to exist in her world...

Needless to say, I've been waiting for this book for years!

Shirley Manson
June 2003

Introduction

There is no shame in believing that Siouxsie And The Banshees were poised to spearhead a revolution back in 1978. It's remarkable to think (given pop's cowed acceptance of its limited role today) that an emerging generation of spotty malcontents had convinced the world that punk's aftershocks were destined to dramatise – shatter, even – our entire way of life.

Rhetoric was rife, and remarkably potent. OK, so anarchy hadn't quite engulfed the UK, but there was no doubt that the new musical wave had unleashed an energy virus that infected everything from politics to pop. Punk's contemptuous raid on complacency had prompted a series of exciting clashes: old or new, fake or real, dead or alive, pointless or necessary.

Compared to the quixotic fantasies of the '60s counterculture, the '76-era subculture marked the beginning of something that was querulous and rooted all too convincingly in the grim realities of daily life. The battles raged far beyond the cosy confines of the music weeklies. Of course, punk existed partly so that Rick Wakeman need never trouble himself with another concept record again, but it also empowered a generation whose misfortune it had been to come of age at a time when the guilty reminders of a '60s hangover hung heavy all around them. Youth was back and bearing symbols inscribed with disturbance and dramatic purpose. Panic on the streets of London...

The Sex Pistols had been punk's pugnacious trespassers and they displayed their disdain with a rabble-rousing roar of masculinity that inspired a thousand imitators. However, it took more than a punch-up and a few bevvies to arouse Siouxsie And The Banshees into action. Founded at the epicentre of the Pistols-induced subculture, but on the fringes of Outer London (and on the margins of most everything else), the Banshees epitomised something other than simple roguish charm and social antagonism. Combining clockwork jerk rhythms, slasher-movie guitar lines, visceral basslines and howling banshee-like vocals, the band's music fused primal scream attack with a complexity rooted in psychological disturbance.

Tension was intrinsic to the Banshees sound and, so it turns out, integral to the group's internal dynamics. Impetuous walkouts and long simmering rivalries, managerial horror stories and those inevitable musical disagreements: the group once famously dubbed the most elitist band in the world endured a surprisingly high rate of Spinal Tap incidents. Many were shrugged off with the following morning's hangover; some were left to fester, periodically emerging to rip the band apart.

For a group that presented such a united front creatively, who seemed in such command of their work, their presentation and their world, the behind-the-scenes chaos and lack of control is what surprised me most during the course of writing this book. But then, to have learned that the band had sat comfortably with accountants and lawyers, together with a PR guru and a team of image consultants, would have been genuinely disappointing. The Banshees' energies were almost wholly invested in their work, their presentation and, of course, the lifestyle that seemed symbiotically entwined with their creativity. The band were their own masters, autonomy and self-rule was paramount and, to a greater or lesser degree, the benefits of that independence can be heard throughout their work.

Siouxsie And The Banshees played their first gig as proud exemplars of a fleeting punk purism. At the 100 Club Punk Festival, in September 1976, they took the ethos to its literal conclusion by getting on stage and performing without any musical know-how whatsoever. Naturally there were important musical influences, from David Bowie's 'keep the audience mystified' aloofness to the strangeness in Marc Bolan's vocal bleats, from the self-harm sound of the strings used in Alfred Hitchcock movies to the majestic cymbal-free insistence of the (Velvet Underground's) Mo Tucker beat.

It is impossible to ignore the adolescent thrill of glam rock, too, which manifested itself in Siouxsie's dark, Bolanic eyes and Kenny Morris's tribal Glitter Band thud.

Glamorous they were, but the Banshees' attitude nevertheless marked a clean break with the showbiz tradition of the early '70s pop-star heroes. Nor did they share the boyish charm of contemporaries such as The Sex Pistols or The Clash. The Banshees fell deliberately, dramatically, into the future. Their music was clipped and brutal, almost autocratic in its sonic strength.

At the heart of the stage, and at the centre of the sound, was Siouxsie, whose dominatrix tones and staccato, alienated yelps accentuated the angular, the out-of-the ordinariness that the band soon came to epitomise.

For many, 1978 was a watershed year. You wore 'Sid Is Innocent' T-shirts and bought records by Elvis Costello and The Members, or you tuned in to punk's permanent revolution as spearheaded by the Banshees, PiL and The Slits. With John Lydon (alias Johnny Rotten) in hiding, Sioux became the frontwoman of a now disparate movement, a sad-eyed siren from suburbia, a Nazimova for the Blank Generation, who promised liberation from a future dominated by the fragrant floral sickliness of a Laura Ashley comfort zone. At last, Farrah Fawcett's flickbacks had met their nemesis. With a dignity and self-belief that echoed the fights Bette Davis had with Warner Brothers in the '30s, coupled with the fantasy-driven sexuality of Gloria Swanson or David Bowie, Siouxsie introduced a new female perspective into a cock-dominated genre that was far less compromising than that suggested by forebears such as Janis Joplin or even Patti Smith. Siouxsie suggested something both illicit and delicious and so did the rest of the band; a remarkable-looking quartet with a sound that was equally unprecedented.

I first heard the band thanks to John Peel's remarkably attuned ear for music that resembled nothing that had been heard before.

During late 1977 and throughout 1978, the DJ was in his element, as rogue punk-inspired spirits such as The Slits, The Pop Group, This Heat and Alternative TV confirmed that the Pistols were a mere catalyst for something far more important and long-lasting. The Banshees utilised the classic four-piece rock-band format but, like Beefheart's Magic Band a decade earlier, they were intent on doing something unique with it. There was no sense of pastiche or familiarity. As enigmatic and as perplexing as Resnais' *Last Year In Marienbad* must have seemed at the dawn of the '60s, the Banshees were nouvelle vague with all its forward-thinking connotations. And that's how they stayed, at least until John and Kenny's departure. A personal high note was tuning into an episode of *Top Of The Pops* in June 1979 and finding that the Banshees' 'Playground Twist' and PiL's 'Death Disco' had transformed the show into a vehicle for sonic subversion. It was an exceptional and, sadly, unrepeatable moment. But there was a delusion there, too, because while the band were beginning to chalk up hits, the world around them stayed the same – or, perhaps, became even more resistant to change. (The arrival of the Thatcher era had coincided awkwardly with post-punk's radical musical leap.) But at least Leo Sayer was no longer commandeering the front pages of the music press. The Banshees were there now, and would remain there for another decade or so.

While working on this book, I was invariably – and repeatedly – quizzed: 'What's Siouxsie like?' Though she's not had a hit in years, the question remains a testament to her enduring, almost silent movie-star status – epitomising a bygone era, yet able to transcend it with a genuine iconic mystique, while her contemporaries are back in Bracknell with their brats and wardrobes stuffed with sportswear. Obviously, these inquisitors are mildly disappointed when I report that I've yet to be torn off a strip for some injudicious remark. It's more likely to be a Sybil Fawlty-like 'Oh, I know!' exclamation that everberates in my head after each conversation. In the flesh, though, she's every inch that '70s-gal-meets-Norma-Desmond combination you'd always imagined her to be – all the more so now we've grown used to characterless stars that epitomise office-like ordinariness.

Inevitably, it's the illicit thrill of previously undervalued Banshees moments that have reared their head during the course of researching and writing this book. *Join Hands* has finally emerged from the shadow of *The Scream*. Why no one's covered 'Desert Kisses' remains one of life's mysteries. *Juju* has far more to offer than simply being the serious goth's first port of call. *Tinderbox* may have been ignored by the critics, but it remains a quintessentially classic Banshees album and is unquestionably ripe for rediscovery. Even work from their later period, such as *Superstition* and *The Rapture*, reveal hidden depths, not least the weird pop appeal of 'O Baby', the obvious descendant of Roxy Music's 'Pyjamarama'. Oops, I can still give *Hyaena* a wide berth, though...

As I write this seat-of-the-pants introduction, a nearby television screen shames the room with images of a bullfight. It's horrific, but kind of appropriate. The Banshees' *raison d'être* always was a disgust with what passes for mainstream entertainment, and the conspiracy of ignorance and finance that continues to dominate and debase Western culture. They were perceived as hard and uncompromising, and necessarily so. After all, there was much to fight against, and there still is. It's truly inspiring to see them now, still full of gusto and enthusiasm and bile, just like they were back in the days when it felt like it really mattered. The baton is there, of course, still waiting to be picked up...

Mark Paytress,
an internet café,
Costa del Sol,
España,
June 2003

1 'I Enjoyed Being The Freak In A Middle-Class Suburb'

– Siouxsie Sioux

Susan Janet Ballion, alias Siouxsie Sioux, born 27 May 1957, Guy's Hospital, Southeast London.

SIOUX: 'My parents met in the Belgian Congo. She was an English/French bilingual secretary; he was a bacteriologist, whose work included milking snakes for their serum. A snake doctor! There were five girls in a family of seven on my mother's side of the family, I believe at least two of whom wanted to study to become doctors like their brothers. But, because of social convention, they weren't allowed to pursue that inclination. Apparently, my grandfather, who was Scottish was a doctor, too, in the First World War. According to my uncle, he witnessed truly atrocious things. It sounded like a butchers' market.

'I don't know a lot about my father. He was Belgian, but from the minority French-speaking Belgians called 'Walloons'. He was a well-educated medical student who bunked out at the last minute, joined a ship and travelled. He had a younger brother and his father was a doctor, too. My father was ten years older than my mother. My sister and brother are ten and eight years older than I am, so my parents had me quite late.

'I grew up in a suburban, residential district with seemingly perfect lives and neat lawns, though our house stuck out like a sore thumb. Everything was overgrown and, as a young girl, I hated the fact that, although it wasn't deliberate, we seemed to draw attention to ourselves, that as a family we were opposed to that correct, middle-class way of being seen to behave.

'Later on I felt proud of the difference, but when you're young you're desperate to conform. When my name was called out in class, I wished I was a Jones or a Smith. No one could pronounce Ballion, and often I wouldn't own up that it was my name.

'Even our building was different. It was one of six, part of a weird housing experiment, and it had a flat roof with metal window frames. All the other houses were made of brick and had regular roofs. Because our roof was always leaking, there was mildew and damp down one side of the building. It was, literally, a sick house.

'My mum was very independent. I didn't really appreciate it at the time, but she held the family together. As well as working, she was practically the man about the house, too. She did things that, traditionally, women didn't do – gardening, decorating, changing fuses. My dad was totally useless at those kinds of things. She also took us on holiday each year. We didn't have a car, so we took a train to Broadstairs, where we'd spend a week in a bed and breakfast.

'She must have found it a real strain, but the generation she'd come from rarely complained. It was that stiff-upper-lip, self-sacrificing mentality. There were a lot of problems in the family, but these were never discussed. Talking about things was unheard of, nothing was ever acknowledged. It was always, "Don't bring anyone round here, and don't talk about your father ..."

'When I was six or seven, I used to toy with the idea of suicide. I'd drop a pile of books, so everyone would think I'd fallen down, and then lie on the bed with a bottle of my mum's asthma pills in my hand. I don't know whether I was thinking seriously about what I was doing. Years later, when I saw *Harold And Maude*, I thought, that's me! I suppose I wanted attention. "Don't be so stupid," my mother would say.

'Probably my first musical memory was becoming fixated on "Johnny Remember Me" by John Leyton [1961], a truly haunting song about a dead girlfriend. I was obsessed with it. There was a great pop tradition throughout the '60s of this type of song – "Terry" by Twinkle and "Leader Of The Pack" by The Shangri-Las. There were dead boyfriends, too. I'd make my brother play it to me again and again. My sister and brother were always playing records on this red-and-cream coloured Bakelite. And we'd watch *Top Of The Pops* and *Ready, Steady, Go!* I loved Cathy McGowan's hair – I had long dark hair with a fringe, too. And I loved that dark-eyed look. I wanted big black panda eyes just like Dusty Springfield, Julie Driscoll and, much later, Marc Bolan.

'I can clearly remember thinking that "Wild Thing" by The Troggs [1966] was really rude, but fantastically exciting. I liked The Beatles, of course. My brother was a huge fan and I remember him buying the *White Album* and *Magical Mystery Tour*. I saw *Magical Mystery Tour* on TV [Christmas 1967], but I didn't really understand it. When I was ten or so, my sister gave me a bell to wear around my neck, but I don't think there was much Flower Power on the streets of Chislehurst. She and my brother were so into music, especially R&B. I grew up to the sound of The Four Tops, Aretha Franklin, Sam & Dave, Otis Redding. It always seemed happy when music was playing.

'I was given a squaw outfit for my sixth birthday. As well as horses and ballet, I just loved Indians! I'd always hated the cowboys, even though we were told that the Indians were the baddies. They were too easily the scapegoat, and were always being attacked, and yet they looked so much better, so much sexier. I didn't get a wigwam, though. For my next birthday, I got one of those canvas-over-assembled-frame Wendy Houses, and pretended it was a wigwam.

'Julie Newmar as Catwoman [from *Batman*] and *The Avengers* inspired me to dress up. I thought Diana Rigg was so sexy. I always loved it when Emma Peel and Steed found an unusual place to share a glass of champagne – in his car or on top of a building. Not only was she good-looking, she could also flip men onto their backs if they misbehaved! I used to wish I could be a superwoman like that. I also thought that Caroline Jones from *The Addams Family* was utterly gorgeous, too. And, through watching Sunday matinees, I discovered Ava Gardner. I'd already begun to identify with brunettes.

'My mum had taken me to see all the Doris Day and Rock Hudson films, but I realised I was nothing like Day and never would be. I used to get this weekly magazine called *Jackie*, which always seemed to have a parade of Doris Day lookalikes on the cover. That gave me my first sense of being a bit of an ugly duckling, of not being considered a beauty.

'My mother took me to the cinema a lot. She was as mad about Elvis Presley as she was Doris Day, and I liked him too. We saw all the colour films, which all seemed to be set in Hawaii. However, what I really loved was animation. I loved those early Disney films: *Snow White* was my favourite. When I first saw the titles for *Bewitched*, I assumed the programme was an animation about a witch and a cat on a broomstick. When it turned out to be a comedy with actors, I was really disappointed.

'I loved the intro and outro for *Doctor Who* – both the music and the visual effects. My favourite enemies were the Daleks, and my favourite doctor the original, William Hartnell. I did enjoy being frightened. I saw [Hitchcock's] *Psycho* when I was really young, and got really worried when my mum said she was going to buy a shower. The sound of running bathwater frightened me. I made sure I was out of the bathroom before the water ran away. I thought it was a monster in the plughole. There was also a film called *Homicidal* [1961], which terrified me, though it seems really corny now. It had a 60-second countdown: "For those of weak hearts and nervous dispositions, you have 60 seconds to get out of the cinema." It was about a transvestite, homicidal maniac: very unusual for the time, though obviously inspired by Hitchcock's psychological style.

'Once, my father told me about the time when he did his service in the Belgian artillery. He was very descriptive about horse psychology and personality. He showed me the hole in his back that was the size of a fist where he'd been kicked. He'd lost half a lung as a result, but when he recounted the story to me, he simply shrugged his shoulders and said it was his own fault.

'By the mid-'60s, my sister and brother were working and I was home alone a lot, especially during school holidays. My mother worked and my dad drank. He was ill. I wasn't aware of that, but I knew I was instinctively embarrassed by the situation. That probably contributed to my awkwardness with other people. Friends would invite me home, but I was too ashamed to reciprocate, so I withdrew. I wasn't a natural exhibitionist. In fact, I was painfully shy in my infant years, though once I got to know someone I was fine. I was always wary of any strangers.

'Music and fantasising were my escape. Books, too. In his odd moments of sobriety, my dad used to read me [Kipling's] *Just So Stories* I was still too young to read, so I used to look at the ink drawings, which were amazing. Each story would start with a capital letter, like a "T" in the shape of a tomahawk – that got me interested in calligraphy. The big one was "The Cat That Walked By Himself", with a beautiful illustration of a cat walking down an avenue of bare trees. I also loved *The Jungle Book*. Those are the earliest literary tales I can remember.

'I was nuts about animals, especially black panthers. I bugged everyone to buy me a black panther. Instead, I got a kitten from the local pub, a tortoiseshell that I named Tina Baby. I wanted to be a Tina. It sounded exotic! I hated being Susan. That was such a plain name. Tina Baby had four kittens on my seventh birthday, all born in a Tuf shoebox. We were allowed to keep one, so I kept the male ginger and called him Poochie.

'Poochie was so affectionate and sweet. He followed me everywhere. Whenever there was the sound of shouting or breaking glass at home, I'd always go and sit on the step of the back door and he'd always come to nudge and nuzzle into me. He was my pal. I thought I'd die when he died. He had no fear. He'd sleep under parked cars. He'd already used up a few lives, and I used to think, one of these days . . . And one day it happened. I was 13. My dad helped me build a rockery in the garden. We buried him there and I planted snowdrops to mark the spot. He was my first love.

'I was seriously sexually assaulted when I was nine. The more damaging aspect being that the assault was totally ignored by my family. The father of the other girl who was also involved and a year older than me, caught the man with his dog walking back with us and it turned into this huge fight. The police were involved, and we got taken off to the police doctor, examined and then questioned. I felt I'd done something awful by "telling" and got this adult into trouble. Also, adding to the sense of being somehow responsible, me and the other girl were stopped from seeing each other again, I think, at the instigation of her parents.

'Chislehurst seemed to be knee deep in wankers. There was one guy they all called "Rolf Harris on a bike" because, along with the dark beard, he used to prowl and wait in ambush with his dick resting on the crossbar of his bike, in a grotesque parody of "Jake The Peg".

'I was very shy around boys. I wasn't comfortable with them at all, particularly boys of my own age – I always hung around with girls or adults. I did like my brother's friends, though, so I used to try and hang out with them. He had this one friend who was really shy, so my brother made me attack him and kiss him. The boy was horrified. He tried to fend me off and went bright red. I used to attack him just to get a reaction. As long as he hated it, I was happy!

'I hated school [Mottingham Secondary School For Girls]. I felt so uncomfortable there. I liked anything that got me out of the classroom, especially team things – sports such as netball, hockey and athletics. I don't remember ever being met from school: I was a latchkey kid.

'I think I was the only female in the family who had any sympathy for my father. Despite feeling a bit of a traitor to my mother and sister, who'd get furious with him, I tried to understand him. He was intelligent and well-read, but there was a sadness about him. He was a defiant man who disliked the hypocrisy of the medical profession. I remember him always calling them a "bunch of quacks". It always baffled me why he chose that particular path. It wasn't just the drinking; he really let himself go as well. He wasn't a git going "Faak this" all the time. I've since wondered whether he didn't like living in England. The lifestyle on the continent is so different, and ending up in this rigid, middle-class English society must have made him unhappy. He was out of his environment.

'When my father died, in spring 1972, my mother took me to see him laid out. It was the first time I'd ever seen a dead body. He looked really peaceful, but it also made me realise that the body isn't the person, although I couldn't articulate that at that age.

'Shortly afterwards, I got really ill and missed a lot of schooling. Ulcerative colitis is an illness with a lot of maybes. It's like an extreme auto-immune syndrome, where your antibodies become too efficient and your body starts attacking itself, which in turn causes ulcers. No one knows what causes it. I think his death affected me more than I realised or cared to admit at the time. I tried to be very brave about it – or was it just the loss of my beloved cat?'

'My illness happened suddenly. It erupted, in the school holidays, because it didn't get treated early. I lost so much weight that I went down to four-and-a-half stone. I couldn't keep anything down. After drinking some milk, I started throwing up white lumps and thought, "Is that part of my body?" There were misdiagnoses and mistreatments. It was all pretty awful. Eventually, I was rushed to hospital with blood coming out from everywhere and had to have a transfusion.

'When they told me I was going to have an operation, I thought, "Oh, good, a scar!" The reality was not glamorous at all. When I came round I couldn't believe the pain. I cried for two days until I started getting morphine shots. And the shock of waking up and seeing my stomach sewn up – it swells after an operation. It looked like it was about to burst. I was frightened of moving in case my insides fell out. As well as all that, they'd made an incision where you'd normally have an appendix scar, and they left the end of my gut poking through! It was a bright, pulsing angry red. They explained that it had to stay like that for a few weeks until my internal wounds healed and they could stitch it all back together again. I was a Doctor Frankenstein experiment!'

'That experience certainly made me aware of my physicality and de-romanticised my vision of human beings. I felt like a slab of meat that could be cut about and then sewn back together again. It was a very disturbing time. Also, I was going through puberty, which made it worse. Being in that situation and feeling so helpless also produced a lot of anger. My experience in hospital made me feel dehumanised, violated and scared, although, at the same time, I would see the humour of being caught up in such a dire situation. It was a London NHS teaching hospital, so you'd have the terminally ill alongside someone with a boil on their bum that needed to be lanced. The trivial with the downright tragic. The inmates and staff were hilarious. They needed to be. A cross between *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* and a Dennis Potter play.

'It was when I was in hospital that I first saw Bowie [performing "Starman"] on *Top Of The Pops*. I'd just turned 15, it was summer 1972 and I'd just started to walk again. Gary Glitter's "Rock 'N' Roll" was also in the charts; so were Marc Bolan and Roxy Music who, like Bowie, didn't seem to be part of the mainstream. That music went directly to me. It was the first time I felt that it was music made for me. It was an amazing time. There were a lot of things to get excited about during the next 18 months or so. I was still pretty much a loner, though. I never hung out with a gang of friends.

'Bowie was incredible – the skinniness, the alienation, the otherworldliness. He was more than simply androgynous, though for the first time, I heard words such as "unisex" and "bisexual". I thought that was really interesting. He was aimed at both male and female audiences, and projected something very different to what most boys and girls were trying to conform to. It was definitely the man/woman of the future, and although nothing was ever said, you understood it instinctively, just by the imagery and the sounds that he used. It was about tearing down the old traditions and clichés. It was a brave new world, a springboard to accentuate your own individuality. But I was never a Bowie lookalike. I found it odd that so many people were content merely to copy.

'Recuperating from my illness was a slow process and I missed a lot of schooling. Eventually I got four O levels, though only two at the first attempt – English Literature and Art. I was annoyed that I didn't get French or English Language, so I started this stupid secretarial course in Orpington where you could also take extra O levels. I loathed it, but I did get the O levels even though I didn't show up for the typing. I think I did it to appease my mother. She always wanted me to have "something to fall back on".

'My sense of identity really began to form around 1973, after I'd left school and started going into London. I got a taste for it pretty quickly. I used to go with my sister who worked in various pubs and clubs as a go-go dancer, places like The Gilded Cage. It wasn't stripping, just exotic dancing. It seemed quite glamorous.

'One day at this club where she was working, this guy noticed me. When I wasn't there the next time, he asked her for my phone number. I was curious, so we met outside *The Rocky Horror Show* on the King's Road. He took me some clubs, including Chaugeramas [on Neal Street, Covent Garden, which later became the Roxy Club], a club in Earls Court called Masquerade and a place on the King's Road called Rod's.

'I was younger than most of the others in those places, and I'd never before been anywhere where I'd seen quite so many amazing-looking people. It was the first time I'd seen people who were obviously influenced by Bowie and where I felt the new future for boys and girls was actually being lived out. Everyone was dressed up and dancing to things like Disco Tex And The Sex-O-Lettes and Sylvester. The crowds were predominantly gay. It was my first sense of belonging. I was inspired by the whole scene, and loved the music, too. I made loads of new friends and started to hang out with them.

'I used to go to Biba [on Kensington High Street] a lot. My first Biba outfit was a black-and-gold Chinese dress with a big slit up the side. I was into clothes and make-up but I didn't really have any money. Then I found out that I could rent costumes from costume stores for a tenner. I used to go in and pick whatever I liked the look of, and every time I went out clubbing I'd have a new outfit. I was really influenced by the whole Bowie thing. I'd always make a big deal of getting dressed up – it was creative.

'I can't believe that I had the nerve to put on those amazing outfits before I left the house, then walk down the road and get the bus to the station. What's more, I'd even try to con the driver that I was a half fare. It didn't even occur to me to take a change of clothes. On with the outfit, out the front door and off down the road with every net curtain in the avenue quivering. I'd imagine everyone tutting, "Look what she's wearing today!" I enjoyed being the freak in a middle-class suburb.'

Steven Bailey, alias Steven Severin, born 25 September 1955, Whittington Hospital, Highgate Hill, North London.

SEVERIN: 'We lived at the bottom of Highgate Hill, near Archway, where we played in the streets and we were out all day. It sounds like a cliché, but London was very different then. The doors really were always open and it felt so safe. I never felt in danger of anything, maybe because I was too young.

'We had an extended family, so my grandmother lived with me and I was brought up surrounded by women. I've got one sister, Diane, who came along when I was five, though the gap was too big for us to get really close.

'My mum worked as a seamstress, and my dad ran the night picture desk at the *Daily Express*. He used to come home with all these weird photos. I'd wake up in the morning, go down to breakfast and there'd be things like Cassius Clay winning the heavyweight crown for the first time. All those amazing sport photos still smelling of ink! I didn't see dad a lot when I was growing up. He was always there, obviously, but he slept during the day and I was at school.

'When I was ten we moved to Bromley. It was very green; I couldn't get over how green it was. There were parks everywhere. By that time, I already loved The Beatles and The Rolling Stones. I remember hearing "She Loves You" and really liking it and wanting it, but the first record my parents bought me was "Twist And Shout".

'I'd been very good at primary school, and good the first years at secondary, where I'd even won a school prize. But it all deteriorated when I was about fourteen. It was the usual – girls, drugs and music. I saw my first gig around that time, a free concert by David Bowie, a local boy, in the Library Gardens in Bromley [16 August 1969]. There were probably only about 200 people there, and the gig didn't make a great impression on me. Much stronger is the memory of a friend getting The Beatles' *White Album*, and going over to his house to listen to it religiously.

'I had two close mates at school, and by now we'd hooked up with some boys from the grammar school, including Bill Broad [alias Billy Idol]. We became a tight gang, heavily into music and growing our hair. We didn't have anything to do other than sit around listening to records, and going to the occasional festival, which we'd find out about in the pages of the *International Times* and *Oz*.

'At school, we were the brightest boys in our year, but we weren't interested in learning anything. We'd just bunk off and piss around. Once I'd got hold of the anarchist must-read, *The Little Red Schoolbook*, it became our Bible. We organised a strike by staying out in the playground after lunch. We tried to get the whole school out, but only about ten of us bothered. It did seem like an important anti-authority statement. We'd always take things a bit further, show off a bit and be more outrageous than anyone else. The skinheads loved us cos we were always disrupting things. Outside the school gates, it was a different matter. The skins hated us then, so we had to learn how to run fast. That said, the longhairs and the skinheads did bond over drugs – hash, blues and, slightly later, LSD.

'I tried acid for the first time at one of the Bromley free festivals. Unfortunately, one of my best friends got beaten up right in front of me, so that didn't go down too well. He was like the Matt Dillon figure from the film *Drugstore Cowboy*. He'd break into chemists and, because he was into science and chemistry, he knew exactly what he was looking for. The first time I ever had cocaine, it was pharmaceutical coke, and I was gibbering, "Oh my God, this is amazing!"'

'Bromley was the best place to get drugs in the south. It was the first big town after Dover. There was always loads of blues and Mandrax. Girls loved Mandrax. I never did acid to excess, tripping every day or anything – more like every couple of weeks. I didn't like it that much, I had loads of bad trips, but I still think everyone should try it once... doors of perception and all that. It was important, really important.

'We never felt we were part of a counterculture, more like this weird little gang that just got bigger and bigger. One of the guy's mothers had a secondhand clothes shop right by the station. We'd go there on Saturdays to help out. Then we realised that there was a back room and an upstairs where we could hang out and party. It was brilliant, like a little club. Partying there got me into glam rock. It changed everything. All the girls were into pop, but Bowie and Roxy Music came from a rock background, and were twisting it and making it more glamorous.

'I left school in summer 1973 having given up on education. I was naturally good at English and Mathematics, so I couldn't really fail them, but I deliberately failed Art. I wrote something like "I don't agree that this is the way you should teach and test Art." That was my submission. I got about four or five O levels, including History, without really trying.

'From the beginning, I'd harboured a dream of being a musician, but I never saw any way of doing it. The idea of learning to play in your bedroom never appealed to me. Why would anyone want to do that? Instead, when I was about 12, a friend of mine got a reel-to-reel tape recorder. At first it was all *Kevin And Perry* stuff, recording burps and farts, but a year later I had my own. I made tape loops of The Rolling Stones' "Bitch" riff, for instance, and the machine became the heart of the group we formed at school. We called ourselves Freemold Grunnuck. I bought a violin from a junkshop and we taped things like scraping the bow across some chest expanders while playing the freak-out section of Led Zeppelin's 'Whole Lotta Love' repeatedly in the background . We obviously thought we were [Frank Zappa's] Mothers Of Invention. Years later, when Brian Eno talked about being a "non-musician" and "playing" the tape recorder, I felt vindicated.

'I was into photography, too, but I didn't know what I wanted to do and I didn't care at that point either. I just wanted to get school over and done with. We couldn't wait to get out of the education system and into the real world. Then we all went straight into temporary jobs.

'I got a whole load of clerical jobs because I was good at figures. It was easy. Then I went to work for RCA Records, basically doing the same thing, temping in one of their accounts offices in New Burlington Street in the West End. That was a big thrill because I got free Bowie and Lou Reed records. It still did my head in doing such a boring job. Creativity just wasn't on the agenda, so one day I said to myself, "Fuck this." And I quit. I decided that that was the last day I was going to work for anybody. I was bored out of my mind.'

20 September 1975
Roxy Music play a sell-out show at Wembley Arena.

Severin: 'It was a Friday, the same day I quit my job. I'd seen Roxy before, at Croydon Greyhound, tiny places like that, but I'm sure this was the first time they'd ever played Wembley. Bowie played there the following May. Both bands had both gone from small concert halls to Wembley and that was quite symbolic.

'Even at that time, only around 20 per cent of the Roxy audience used to dress up, and they did it badly. It was the GI Joe look, army shirts and stuff. They all looked like squaddies. It was the tail end of glam and they were looking backwards – to the '40s. I guess we were all doing it. There were few gigs worth seeing. At one time, you could see something every week – New York Dolls, Sparks, Can, Cockney Rebel – but that was changing. glam rock had faded. Roxy and Bowie were getting too big. There was nothing new coming through that we could identify with.'

SIOUX: 'I was there on my own, which wasn't unusual for me. I was quite independent. I didn't have people to go to gigs with, so I'd often trek off on my own. I got dressed in a purple-and-green outfit, with a huge fishtail-like bustle, got the bus to the train station, sat on the platform, perched myself in the train carriage and then traipsed across London. The dress must have been used in some vaudeville costume drama, but it seemed quite normal to me. I used to enjoy people staring at me and then me turning my nose up at them.'

SEVERIN: 'I had a blond quiff, a tartan jacket, black drainpipes and platform shoes with white crepe soles and black patent leather uppers which had two stripes, Adidas-style. I think that's why Sioux said to me, "You look very sporty." Fashion was very important. It gave you a sense of belonging, of being outside of everything, and at the same time being with your own gang. I went with my friend Simon Barker.'

SIOUX: 'Wandering off for a drink during the intermission, I bumped into some school friends I'd met on the platform a few months earlier. This guy Steven was with them. I didn't realise that meeting him was going to change both of our lives. At the time, I was more interested in the fact that he had some connection to a photography course at Bromley College, because I was toying with the idea of modelling and needed someone to take some photos. So I asked him.

'The costume had to go back a couple of days later, so I needed the pictures done quickly. I got him to come round to my house so we could take some pictures under the streetlamps. The photos never really worked out. To be honest, I don't think he even had any film in the camera. That was the first time we spent time together and we got on really well.'

SEVERIN: 'After that, we just started hanging out.'

SIOUX: 'Steven was one of the first straight guys I'd met in a long time. He seemed like a fellow outsider. He wasn't macho, or scared by my directness, and he didn't think my humour too sick. Music was our strongest connection, especially Bowie, though I'd been more into things like Brass Construction and a lot of imported American dance music, because that was the stuff that was big in the clubs. Steve and Simon ced a lot of that, too, but they were definitely responsible for broadening my tastes. I'd never heard Velvet Underground before – probably because I never read the music press, which seemed to be a boy thing – so he and Simon played some for me. When I heard Iggy Pop for the first time, I remember feeling outraged that an artist like that had been denied access to *Top Of The Popos* or the radio. "Shake Appeal" should have been a Top 10 hit! Later on, when we started making music, I thought it was stupid not be on *Top Of The Pops*. I thought, "You're depriving people and not changing things."'

Simon Barker (friend): 'I'd actually met Sioux some time before the Roxy concert. Even then, I couldn't believe how amazing she looked. Her hair was in a really extreme cut, with colours dyed into it. Some people might think "Sioux" is an invention, but she's always looked incredible. She was a star before she'd sung a note.'

Sioux: 'That was on Bromley South platform. I was coming back from London on the train and I'd bumped into a couple of school friends, Gillian and Patricia. Simon was with them, and though we didn't swap numbers we did remember each other.'

Simon Barker: 'People say suburbia is suffocating, but we thought what we were doing was great. It was everybody else that was a bit boring. And we were so close to London, 20 minutes on the train, so we went to all the major gigs. It wasn't a big deal. Bromley is a middle-class suburb, and, while we'd get a bit of abuse from people, I can't say we felt intimidated. We just did what we wanted to do. When you're living in Bromley, it's not difficult to break out of it. It wasn't some council estate in Hull. We saw The New York Dolls in Biba: we wouldn't have been able to have done that had we not been living close to London.'

Berlin (friend): 'We were all misfits living in the same suburb, and inevitably those misfits were going to gravitate towards each other. I didn't really have any friends until I met Simone. I'd introduced myself to her one day in 1975 after seeing her walking down Bromley High Street: this black girl with a shaved head smoking Russian Sobranie cigarettes! I thought, "This is so fucking glamorous," so I asked her for a light and we got chatting. She said, "My boyfriend would love you," so she introduced me to Simon and Steven and through them I eventually met Siouxsie. I didn't know these people existed.'

9 December 1975

The Sex Pistols support Newcastle-based Fogg at Ravensbourne College Of Art, one of a dozen or so concerts the group play in the Greater London area that winter.

Severin: 'I wanted to see bands all the time, not to study them with an idea of wanting to be in a band myself, but because I was so much into music. I wanted to hear and devour everything.'

Simon Barker: 'I think I was the only one who actually saw the show. Steven got there late. They'd already played, so I told him about it. I was the only person clapping. Everyone else was just looking. They couldn't believe it. We didn't know they were going to be on. It was complete chance.'

Severin: 'I got the drinks. Simon came rushing out and said, "They were brilliant. The singer blew his nose on stage!" He told me what he'd just witnessed and then we spotted Malcolm [McLaren] and Vivienne [Westwood] in the bar. They start talking to us, then, after a while, the Pistols came in and started chatting. It was Glen [Matlock], more than anybody, who urged us to go to the next gigs. I think they probably had about a half a dozen people watching them. Complete indifference. It was early days for them.'

Simon Barker: 'I knew that Steven would have loved them. Billy [Broad, alias Idol], too, because he could actually play guitar. We made sure that the next time they played, we all saw them.'

2 'After Seeing The Pistols, I Thought, "This Is It. This Is Our Mission"'

– Steven Severin

12 February 1976
The Sex Pistols play the Marquee Club, London.

SEVERIN: 'Simon and I jumped on the train. We were the advance scouts, the ones bold enough to make the trip. They'd put a row of chairs in front of the stage and nobody sat in them. We were at the bar, watching from the back: there could have only been a dozen or so people there. John got pissed off with the lack of reaction from the crowd so he leaped down and started throwing chairs around. Someone jumped on stage and probably exposed something. And that was it. After seeing the Pistols, I thought, "This is it, this is our mission." We went to see them everywhere. At last we'd got a band who were playing everywhere and who we could really get into.

'My initial feeling was that they were like an English Iggy and The Stooges – completely mad and crazy. But the bottom line is that The Sex Pistols were just a great band. They had such brilliant attitude on stage and were everything I wanted to see. The lyrics made a lot of sense, too. I read a review afterwards and it patronised them by saying they were incompetent. So we started to convert everybody who would listen, telling them about this great band that was playing every week. That spring, each time the Pistols played, the audience doubled. At the Marquee it was, like, 15 people and then it would be 30, 60 until there were 100 for a key gig at The Nashville [23 April 1976].'

BERLIN: 'Some time around Valentine's Day, Simon and Steven arranged a party in this horrible two-up, two-down suburban house in

Bromley. I think they'd already seen The Sex Pistols by then. It was called the Nuremberg Reunion Rally Party, and you could come as you wanted. I decided I would go in drag. I wore a pencil skirt and stilettos, put on far too much make-up and greased my hair back with loads of Brylcreem.

Severin: 'Berlin was only 15 and the first gay person we'd ever really met. He was game for anything.'

Berlin: 'I called myself Berlin because it was campy, it was *Cabaret* and the Christopher Isherwood stories had caught my imagination. I loved the look of it all: red and black, great colours! It looked stylish. I was too young to realise the scandalous side of it. It certainly wasn't pro-fascist, pro-Nazi. It was more, "What's the worst thing you can do to your parents who'd fought and died in the War?" Really fuck them off.'

Severin: 'There were about 20 or 30 of us having what was ostensibly a normal house party – but with homemade swastikas, armbands, brown shirts, things like that. There was no evil behind it. It was inspired by *Cabaret* and *The Rocky Horror Show*, all very camp.'

Berlin: 'There was excitement about an outrageous and glamorous girl they'd met at the Roxy Music concert who might turn up. It was getting late. I was getting really drunk and Severin was taking photographs of me in the kitchen feigning fellatio on a banana. Then the bell went and Sioux came in with her friend Moira. The whole room crackled. They looked like punkish '20s flappers. Sioux wore a gold-and-black Chinese dress, fishnets and these pink transparent stilettos, which Malcolm and Vivienne were doing, that she'd bought from Sex. Her hair was cropped – I used to call it a crown of thorns – with blonde spiky bits around her fringe. She had very theatrical make-up and little swastikas on her cheekbones. The two girls saw me in drag and we clicked immediately. I was probably the only other person attempting overt glamour at that stage and Sioux was glamour incarnate. To say that she's gay-friendly is an understatement: she's the Queen of Queens! The gay scene was already familiar territory to her – she was a couple of years older than me, and had been hanging out in gay clubs.'

Sioux: 'I'd meet all these incredible characters. John and Michael were twin Bowie fans who worked on a hot dog stall. They used to copy every costume Bowie ever appeared in and then take it to extremes. It wasn't unusual for them to turn up in Superman outfits or something similar. They used to go down to a club in Poland Street called Louise's, and that became one of our regular hangouts.'

SIMON BARKER: 'Sioux had a much better knowledge of London than us. While everyone else was studying for A-levels, she was waitressing at the Valbonne in Carnaby Street, a bar where her sister had a job as a dancer. It was Siouxsie who introduced us to Louise's, this lesbian club in Soho. The first time we went, there were all these Wimbledon ladies' tennis players dancing with each other. It was so exciting, seeing people who'd been on TV and they're all, like, couples.'

BERLIN: 'We'd meet at Bromley South, get off at Victoria, then take the tube to Soho. Sioux knew all the clubs – Louise's, Bangs, Chaugeramas. I don't know what attracted her to gay clubs. I'm sure that not feeling threatened and being able to have a good time was part of it.'

SEVERIN: 'The gay subculture was a haven for us because of the way we looked. We went to Louise's all the time. They had to serve food in order to sell booze after a certain time at night, so there were little plates of ham and pickles on the tables, probably one drink between the three of us.'

SIOUX: 'We seemed to be going out every night, particularly me Steven and Simon. The fact that we didn't have much money never seemed much of a problem. We just enjoyed what was going, bunked our fares and survived on enthusiasm. And we always seemed to have so much to talk about. We'd spend all night chatting about music and films, and while we were obviously part of a scene, it wasn't calculated. For me, it was the joy of hanging out with like-minded people. I'd never had that before because, right from when I was at school, I'd always felt completely out of step with the people around me.'

SIMON BARKER: 'It was us who discovered Louise's, so, when you're the first, you are later deemed responsible for the scene that subsequently emerges. We didn't think about it at the time. We were kids from the suburbs going to see The Sex Pistols and hanging out in gay clubs, not some creative, cultural force.'

SEVERIN: 'Not everyone I knew loved the Pistols. Nearly all of my friends who'd grown up with me in Bromley didn't like them much, and that was when I really started moving away from them and towards Simon, Siouxsie and the rest of that crowd.'

SIOUX: 'When Steven and Simon started telling me about The Sex Pistols, it was obvious they were coming from a different scene, a more gig-based one. The first gig I ever went to was a festival at Crystal Palace [7 June 1975] featuring John Cale, Chris Spedding and Cockney Rebel. I hadn't been to many concerts up to that point, apart from things like Roxy Music, Lou Reed and Hunter/Ronson.

'The first time I saw the Pistols was at another of their college gigs. I'd never seen a band at such an early stage in their career before, so it was very exciting. I was going through my '50s phase then, huge taffeta dresses and stilettos, but for those early gigs there was no real fashion scene around the band.

'One of the best things was watching people cower in front of the stage, wondering what was going to happen to them. I'd never seen a band intimidate and repel an audience like that before. They were only playing in a school gym or something, with a white line separating them from the audience, but it was amazing! Great theatre – all these boring students praying that Johnny Rotten wouldn't glare at them. Steven and Simon introduced me to them afterwards. Rotten was clearly a man on his own; they'd have been just another ordinary band if it hadn't been for him. I saw the Pistols pretty often after that. The second time was at a gay club, Bangs, on Tottenham Court Road, and then at the 100 Club.'

30 March 1976
The Sex Pistols play the 100 Club in Oxford Street for the first time.

SEVERIN: 'At first it was just one or two shows, then by mid-May they were doing a residency every Tuesday. After four or five Tuesdays we started to bring everybody, cos we knew they'd be playing. I wrote to Billy Idol, who was studying English at the University of Sussex in Brighton. He had a band down there, a kind of American rock band thing. He was the only one of our group of friends who went away to university. I said, "You've got to come up and see this band." He came up and was converted immediately, like nearly everybody else was.'

Sioux: 'By this point there was a little gang of people starting to go to all their gigs and that was when I first started to realise that Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood were involved with the band. I was aware of their shop, Let It Rock, in the King's Road, the place that had become Sex. I'd been there a few times and bought some stuff, not real clothes because I couldn't afford them, but I did get Vivienne to make me a pair of fishnet tights with gold tassels. I thought she was so beautiful. She had this long, spiky white hair which looked amazing, and pinky-purple lipstick. Later, I met Jordan, who worked at the shop and was part of the Pistols entourage. She was so striking.'

Severin: 'We never got to wear any of the clothes. Only those with rich parents could afford Sex clothes – that's when all the home-made thing started. There were plenty of jumble sales around where you could pick up bits and transform them into something else. Every week the look would change. The goal was to mix everything up. When we started with the swastika thing, it was about pulling in influences from different places. You were constantly looking for new things, simply as a way to build an identity and set you apart from other people. You wanted to look as good as you possibly could for the next gig. I think it all goes back to Bowie. He was the first major star to change his image so rapidly and so often. The majority of early Pistols fans were huge Bowie fans.

'The other people who were initially drawn to the Pistols were the Soul Boys. There were these clubs like the Lacy Lady in Ilford and another in Southend that, for some reason, had little gangs of Bowie fans. One of the key things in early '76 was a Bowie night every Tuesday at a place called Crackers – no band, just Bowie records all night with people dressed up in Bowie-related outfits. The Soul Boys were always there.'

May 1976
The Sex Pistols put in an appearance at 'Berlin's Baby Bondage Party', held at his parents' house at 8 Plaistow Grove, Bromley – two doors up from Bowie's childhood home at number four.

Bertie: 'Shortly after we moved in, some time in 1969, the doorbell rang and this smartly dressed woman with beehive hair said, "I'm Mrs Jones, welcome to Plaistow Grove." She handed over a pint of milk – and a seven-inch single. "Oh, my son's in a band, and here's his record ['Space Oddity']. You can borrow it if you like." She called back for it two days later. I occasionally used to hear him tune up from my bedroom window. Simon and Simone were particularly impressed because they were Bowie freaks.

'I'd seen The Sex Pistols at the 100 Club, and Sioux, Steven and Simon had become quite friendly with them. One weekend, when my parents were away ...'

SIMON BARKER: '... Steve and I took over Berlin's house and invited The Sex Pistols. It wasn't like, one day we were at the show, and the next we were all best friends. It just grew the more we saw them.'

BERLIN: 'It was like hell on earth. Great – real chaos in the suburbs. People just went over-the-top, lost their minds through too much sulphate and alcohol. I'd put all my parents' trinkets away in cupboards and covered everything in white sheets. Sioux, Steven, Simon and Simone had all turned up to help me, and to put the records on – Bowie, The Stooges, Patti Smith, with a bit of Diana Ross thrown in. Then around 60 people turned up. It was astonishing to seeing all these people. We were only used to having half a dozen of us around. All sorts of creatures came. One guy arrived dressed in a rubber swimsuit and a plastic mac.'

GLEN MATLOCK (Sex Pistols' bassist): 'Siouxsie opened the door wearing one of those plastic aprons with a nude lady on it. She turned around and it was obvious that she had nothing on underneath. I thought, This looks quite interesting ...'

BERLIN: 'Siouxsie called it Sex Olympics. Everybody fucked everybody else. I was scared. I just couldn't control it. I had a music centre in my bedroom, which John Lydon [alias Rotten] decided to wreck for no reason. He was playing the soundtrack to *Cabaret* and lining up the sulphate, with the windows wide open so the neighbours could hear everything that was going on.

'Inevitably, the doorbell went and it was these typical nosy, opinionated, suburban middle-aged arseholes. Siouxsie, who was in fishnets, plastic apron, stilettos and nothing else, with a cat-o'-nine-tails in her hand said, "I'll go to the door, come with me..." There was this woman with grey hair and flyaway glasses mumbling something about calling the police. Then she looked Sioux up and down: "You're just a little slut!" Sioux said, "What did you say?" She repeated it: "You're a slut!" Siouxsie pulled back her hand and smashed the woman round the face, making her glasses fly off. But they were cowards: the police never came. Dawn eventually appeared, and Siouxsie and the others helped me clear up a bit. It was a wild night.'

Simon Barker: 'We did find kindred spirits among the Sex crowd. If you wore straight-legged trousers in those days, you were "a poof". It was that extreme. Every football fan used to wear platform shoes and wide, three-button, high-waisted trousers, so flat shoes and straight trousers were considered outrageous. To see people wearing the same clothes as you was really inspiring. When you're living in Bromley, you feel like you're the only ones ...'

Berlin: 'One day, Siouxsie said, "You must come over to my house for tea," which was kind of glamorous. You just didn't do that kind of thing. I put on a red-and-white striped T-shirt, a pair of tight jeans, red plastic sandals, a huge gold belt and a little bit of make-up and took the 227, a single-decker, from Bromley North to Chislehurst. I got off at this little parade of shops and Siouxsie came *screaming* round the corner wearing a flared-out '50s dress, a bodice, stilettos and full make-up – it was mid-afternoon. When we went back to her house, it was rather more formal. Her mum brought us pâté on toast and Earl Grey tea!

'Another time we stayed local, we decided to go to a wine bar called Cherries. It was in a basement in a horrible, concrete '60s shopping mall, and it was full of geezers and sped-out hippies. I'd agreed that I'd go with her on a dog lead, which I borrowed from a fat cocker spaniel we had called Pip. We met at Bromley South station, I got down on all fours and we walked in. It was eight o'clock on a Friday evening and the place was heaving. We sauntered through the crowd, found a table in the middle of the room and sat down. I was doing the whole doggy thing, and to begin with, everyone seemed to think it was a laugh.

'The waitress came over and Sioux said, "I'll have a vodka and orange and a bowl of water for my dog." "Pardon?" Sioux said, "Are you fucking deaf? I said a vodka and orange and a bowl of water for my dog." I was panting and yelping and Sioux was pulling my chain. The waitress finally came over with a vodka and orange and a big red doggy bowl full of water, which I drank. Then the atmosphere started to change. People had stopped laughing. The room had been reduced to silence. The manager came up to us and said, "I think you should go." Sioux ignored him. Next thing we knew, he'd jumped over the bar with a baseball bat and said, "Fucking get out – NOW!" She continued sipping her drink. He said, "I'm not joking, get out!" She put her fag out, and said, "C'mon boy." As we got to the door, I cocked my leg at one of the tables. We got out into the precinct and we howled.

'We were adolescents reacting against our parents, against the suburbs, against normality. The whole point was effrontery, to piss people off at all costs and to maintain our individuality. Quentin Crisp once said, "Find out who you are and then do it like mad." And it was exactly that: finding out who we were, inventing identities, our own glamorised ideal. That partly explains why we all played around with different names.'

SIOUX: 'Apart from it being the Indian tribe name, I liked "Sioux" because it had a silent "x" in it. I liked the idea of having an "x" in my name. But its real origin is even sillier. Simon sent me a postcard, and he signed it "Si" with an "x" right close. I simply assumed he spelled his name "Six", so I made a joke out of it next time I saw him. He said, "No, that's a kiss!" That made it easy for me to start calling myself "Sioux".

BERLIN: 'Before that, she'd called herself "Candy Sue", but that didn't last for more than a week. Maybe it was from [Andy Warhol acolyte] Candy Darling, maybe Candy Clark from *The Man Who Fell To Earth*. It does sound very Warhol, very American. She'd always been called Suzy, as in S-U-Z-Y. Steven Bailey was Steve Spunker for a while …'

SEVERIN: '"Severin" came from [the Velvet Underground song] "Venus In Furs". I thought it was a great name. It's an art-school tradition, and besides, "Bailey" didn't have the right ring to it. From the outside, we must have looked really obnoxious because we were the inner core of this super-trendy thing that was going on. Certain people thought we were a right bunch of middle-class twats, which wasn't the case at all. I particularly resented this accusation, having come from a working-class family from the Archway. If we seemed élitist, it was probably cos we had style and that was in short supply. Also, we were hanging out with the Pistols and they were the best. There were still only a few dozen people going to see them, so we felt we were part of something very secret. We didn't even call ourselves punks, journalists later coined that.'

GLEN MATLOCK: 'They were a crowd of people who were a bit different from the rest – a bit glam rock, a bit Velvet Underground, a bit Roxy Music kind of look. The forerunners of punk ...'

BERLIN: 'Somewhere along the line, the word "punk" got thrown in. We had no idea what that was. That word simply didn't exist when we were having parties in the suburbs, shopping at Sex and seeing the Pistols.'

SIOUX: 'Punk wasn't a calculated movement. It was a complete fluke, initiated in a post-glitter world where Bowie had retired and started to look like a golfer, and a load of us were looking for something new. Clubs and gigs were the only source of new music for us, though we were starting to hear new stuff from America, things like The Ramones, Jonathan Richman, Patti Smith, Television and Richard Hell. Gradually a hard-core group of 15 or 20 of us would see each other out all the time. It was simply luck that we met up and connected.'

MARCO PIRRONI: 'Everyone came in small gangs from the suburbs. No one really knew each other, but we all dressed and thought in roughly the same way. We were fragments that slowly began to come together.'

SEVERIN: 'Right from the start, Malcolm [McLaren] was keen to build an entourage around the band and the shop. He would ring to tell us when the Pistols were playing secret gigs.'

BERLIN: 'He liked the idea that he was recreating [Andy Warhol's] original Factory scene. Maybe he was opportunistic, but to me he always seemed to be thinking, talking and coming up with ideas. He saw how to put the jigsaw together. It all fulfilled his Dickensian fantasies.

'Linda Ashby is very important in this. She was a lesbian prostitute who had an apartment in the St James's Hotel. We were still living in the suburbs, which either meant getting a cab that we couldn't afford, or the night bus. So, we'd get a cab to Linda's. That was a great breeding ground, where Malcolm and Vivienne would turn up and Malcolm would spout off his ideas. The network was basically the suburbs, the shop and Linda Ashby's apartment, along with a couple of rent-boy clubs – Louise's, and Sombreros in Kensington High Street, where Bowie and Amanda Lear used to go. These were little sanctuaries where you could go and feel safe.'

Sioux: 'We all used to end up at Linda's at the end of the night. She'd carry on her work while we were in the other room. We'd be sitting having cups of tea, or something stronger, and in the other room there'd be a newsreader or a kids' TV presenter with a baseball bat up their arse. She was a lesbian, but her work was never about sex. It was more about S&M, so I always thought it was a wonderful profession for her to have.'

Severin: 'It was open house to all of us. Linda liked collecting people. It was weird knowing someone with their own suite of rooms in a hotel.'

29 August 1976

The Sex Pistols play at the Screen On The Green in Islington. A photo taken that night, featuring Sioux and Severin in full fetish regalia, does much to establish the emerging punk rock's outré style.

Severin: 'In January, the Pistols were playing to a dozen or so people at the Marquee, but by the end of the summer they had become a phenomenon. They'd disappeared into a studio to do some recording and the Screen On The Green was their big coming-out gig.'

Sioux: 'Also on the bill were The Buzzcocks, The Clash and Subway Sect. They were just about the only punk bands around, although we didn't call it "punk". Ever.'

Severin: ' By now about 50 people were going regularly to the Pistols gigs and I knew most of them. I doubt if many people paid. Bondage trousers first cropped up around this time, and Malcolm started to bring everyone he knew over from America to join in the party that was starting. The Pistols had just signed to EMI, and it was all moving at a great speed.'

3 September 1976

The Bromley-based fans travel to Paris to see The Sex Pistols' first overseas concert, at the Club Du Chalet Du Lac.

Sioux: 'We heard that The Sex Pistols were playing in Paris, so we decided to drive over in Billy Idol's van. There was me, Steven, Billy, Simon, Debbie and The Twins, a whole gang of us. I'd been abroad once before on a trip to Belgium to meet my dad's mother. Oh, and to Minorca with a school friend. But this was the first time I'd ever been abroad with my mates. It was a real spur-of-the-moment thing.'

Glen Matlock: 'Paris was a big adventure for everybody. But I think the French had a lot of trouble with swastikas as well! I'm not sure that wearing one was the cleverest move on her part.'

Sioux: 'It was the kitsch value of it all that appealed to me, the *Salon Kitty*, *Night Porter*, *Springtime For Hitler* thing. High camp, not death camp. I wore the outfit I'd worn for a Sex Pistols gig at the Screen On The Green – a black PVC bra and knickers, fishnet stockings, suspenders, a swastika, bondage stilettos from Sex and, of all things, a see-through plastic raincoat with white polka dots. Just in case it rained.

'We got the ferry over and turned up right outside the venue. The boys, dressed in plastic trousers and Karl Marx and Cambridge Rapist T-shirts, got out first. The rest of us were still doing our make-up when I heard a bit of a commotion. I got out of the van and saw all these Algerian rockers crowding around the boys, looking like they were trying to rape them. Steven, Simon and The Twins looked really scared so I instinctively piled in shouting "Fuck off" in French at them. The boys ran off down the road leaving me and Debbie to deal with it.

'We were surrounded by half a dozen guys in broad daylight with the punters queueing up for the gig just a few yards away. Suddenly, the Algerians whipped out their switchblades. I started shouting at them even louder, calling them every name under the sun. One of them walked up and punched me in the face really hard, and then they all sauntered off. I was left with blood running from my nose, Debbie in tears, and everyone else just staring. Nils Stevenson, who was Malcolm McLaren's second-in-command, sneaked me into the dressing room, and when the Pistols saw me covered in blood they were really excited. They thought it was a great way to start a gig.

'As always, once the Pistols started playing, most of the audience thought they were crap. We started goading them, trying to get them to dance. While this was going on, other people started noticing the swastika. Before we knew it, there was all this jostling and shoving, then tables and chairs were being hurled all over the place and the Pistols started throwing things from the stage. It escalated into a giant brawl. We had to be chaperoned backstage because half the crowd wanted to lynch us. I didn't realise, but it was the anniversary of the date the Allies discovered Auschwitz, or Hitler's birthday or something, and everyone was convinced I was making some nasty political statement. I was completely ignorant of all that. Anyway, the gig degenerated into chaos. I don't think the band even finished their set before the plugs were pulled.'

SEVERIN: 'The French weren't really into punk. Or at least not the Pistols' brand of it. They always seemed to prefer that Patti Smith "storm-the-Sorbonne" hippie-chic and probably wanted to read a bit more into the Pistols than was actually there. The reality was a bit too uncouth for them.'

SIOUX: 'Malcolm was very excited that [*Melody Maker* journalist] Caroline Coon was there to cover it all. She had a hotel room that she let me use to shower all the blood off. But that was the next day. We'd spent the night sleeping under the Eiffel Tower, so I must have looked a complete freak next morning when we were having coffee and *croque monsieurs* in *Les Deux Magots*.

'I think the Pistols must have been quite pissed off because Caroline was spending a lot of time talking to me. She'd decided that the piece she was writing was going to be about the fans rather than the band. It was her that coined the name "The Bromley Contingent" to describe us. It wasn't a name we were particularly happy with, but it stuck.'

BERTIE: 'I just thought she destroyed my social life by writing an article telling the world where everybody was hanging out. After that, the dregs started coming down.'

SEVERIN: 'The Bromley Contingent was a bit of a misnomer cos we were from all over the place – Kentish Town, Orpington, Bromley. We certainly never referred to ourselves as that. Never! But Caroline Coon and [*Sounds*'] John Ingham, two journalists who went to every gig, were true champions of the scene and really encouraged everything.'

SIMON BARKER: 'Me, Steve and Berlin were the only ones who came from Bromley. Sioux came from Chislehurst, Little Debs [Debbie Wilson] came from Burnt Oak, Philip Salon, who was in one set of pictures with us, came from Dollis Hill. Soon, anyone who was seen out with us was described as a member of The Bromley Contingent.'

SIOUX: 'After we got back from Paris, resentments from some of the other people we used to see began to creep in. Those people all thought we'd called ourselves The Bromley Contingent, when we hadn't. So stupid.'

BERLIN: 'Middle-class wankers? I might be a wanker, but I'm definitely not middle class. Look at The Damned, please. I wouldn't have wiped my bum on them! Sid Vicious hated us too. He called us a bunch of poseurs, and in a way he was right. Looking from the outside, all we did was stand around, give off attitude and look incredible. What is posing if it's not standing there being yourself and presenting your creation?'

GLEN MATLOCK: 'The Bromley Contingent were pretty important. If you've got a band, you need a following, otherwise it's all a bit pointless. They certainly looked the part. They weren't Joe Soap-looking people.'

SEVERIN: 'The first time I got my picture in a paper was at Chelsea's debut gig [at the ICA, London, 18 October 1976]. Siouxsie, Little Debbie and myself were photographed in the queue for tickets at the box office. Siouxsie was wearing a polka-dot see-through with a little cardigan over the top and the picture was in the *Daily Mail* the next day. The Tory MP Norman St John Stevas was quoted as saying, "These are the wreckers of civilisation." We quite liked the idea of that!'

SIMON BARKER: 'Me and Steven were really blasé about that kind of thing. We knew we looked great. We were in the papers because we thought we deserved it. We were so sure of what we were doing that we didn't need that recognition.'

BERLIN: 'Probably the only real picture of The Bromley Contingent was taken for *Harpers & Queen*. We did this shoot where we were all screaming at the camera. That was when Sioux had hit her starry-eyed-and-blonde phase.'

SIMON BARKER: 'We used to get money for doing photographs because some magazine from Italy or wherever would come to London to get some pictures of punks. We used to get £30 or £40, which was a lot of money then. None of us were working, so that's how we used to get by.'

SEVERIN: 'It was around this time that The Clash played the ICA with the Buzzcocks [23 October]. I loved the Buzzcocks but I was slightly ambivalent about The Clash. At the gig, I thought they were fantastic, but I felt there was something very traditional about what they were doing. There was always this kind of worthy thing with them and you never really knew which side of the fence they were on. There was something more debauched about the Pistols, and that was obviously more attractive. The Clash were more sincere and a bit humourless. With the Pistols, there would always be a point in the show where I'd be howling with laughter.'

1 December 1976
The Bromley Contingent join The Sex Pistols on Thames Television's *Today* show, hosted by Bill Grundy.

SIOUX: 'It was a real last-minute thing. Queen were meant to be on the show, which went out live at six in the evening, but they'd pulled out and the Pistols had somehow wangled themselves on as replacements. Simon got a call from Malcolm, who said he'd pay our train fares if we went along to hang out and stand in the background. It sounded too much fun to resist, so we hopped straight onto the train and went down to the studios.'

GLEN: 'To be honest, I used to get a bit peeved that every time we did a TV show, we'd turn up and there'd be The Bromley Contingent again. I didn't know they were going to be on the Bill Grundy show. That was Malcolm's idea.'

SIOUX: 'We were shown into the Green Room, where everything was free, so we started drinking immediately. Everyone, the band and us, were all getting completely pissed. Bill Grundy came in to see us and even then I was winding him up. He kept on leering at me and we were all just laughing at him.

'We went out to this tiny studio and Bill Grundy did the interview. By this time we were all terribly drunk, but we were having a laugh. We were all a bit nervous, too. Actually most of the interview was really boring and it might have ended up being something no one remembered at all. Then Grundy looked at me and I pulled a weird face at him. That's when all the swearing started. We weren't even thinking about it going out live into people's living rooms while they were having their dinner.'

SEVERIN: 'Grundy wasn't prepared. It had been such short notice that he'd had to wing it. And with The Sex Pistols and Siouxsie facing him, it was always going to end in disaster. I thought it was hilarious, especially once they got going.'

SIMON BARKER: 'Steve [Jones] spoke like that all the time. He was this real West London lad and that was his natural language. He wasn't trying to be outrageous. So when Bill Grundy said, "Say something outrageous," he got what he asked for.'

SIOUX: 'After the cameras stopped rolling, Grundy just got up and walked off, but we went back to the Green Room to have more drink. They had all these phones in there, so when people rang up to complain about what they'd just seen, we picked up the phones, listened to them complain and then told them to piss off. It was great fun. Malcolm was in a right state, though. He was convinced that we'd blown it all for them. I don't think he ever really saw the appeal of just having a laugh.'

SEVERIN: 'Afterwards, we all piled off to see a gig at the Hope And Anchor and a journalist called Adrian Thrills came up to me and said, "It's all over, you've ruined everything." It was amazing how scared everyone got just because it had all got a little bit out wild. I'm sure Malcolm's slogans like "Cash From Chaos" were drafted in hindsight and that he'd have much preferred being able to control it a bit more. To this day, I'm convinced that he never had a masterplan for the Pistols, that he was more like Factory Records' Tony Wilson in Manchester, an entrepreneurial figure who just wanted to see a good young band coming through. In retrospect, the Grundy performance was the best thing that could have happened to the Pistols because it catapulted them into everybody's living room and made them a household name overnight. No amount of touring could have done that.'

SIOUX: 'After the show, I got the train and went home. It wasn't until the next day when we saw the headlines in the papers that we realised what a big thing it was. Today, it seems incredible that what we did could have caused such outrage.'

SEVERIN: 'That clip is shown pretty regularly. It even made the Top 10 on *The Greatest TV Moments Of All Time*, and rightly so. But it's still weird to watch it, because it doesn't even seem like it's Siouxsie and me there on screen. I'm probably as detached from it as any other viewer because it's become such an iconic piece of footage. You think of it as a piece of historical film like the moon landing or Kennedy being shot, not something that you actually participated in.'

SIMON BARKER: 'Nowadays, the Grundy episode is regarded as historic, but at the time it generated a lot of bad publicity. I remember going out later that night and hearing people say, "Yeah, he was one of 'em." There was all that stuff about lorry drivers smashing their TVs in. It wasn't positive at all.'

SIOUX: 'It was only after the Grundy show that people began to recognise us in the street. It didn't help that papers like the *Daily Mirror* were taking pictures of us and trying to make it all one big scandal. They printed this grumpy photo of me with blonde hair, together with the headline, "Siouxsie's A Punk Shocker". I hated that. It was like a handbook of how to be a punk: they drink brown ale and they spit. Total rubish. That was the first time I realised we were fodder. Not again, thank you.

SEVERIN: 'You did get anaesthetised to all the violence because it seemed like a natural progression from getting chased by skinheads a few years earlier. It was the era of soccer hooligans, so there was an ever-present sense of menace in the air. You always felt something might go off. Invariably it did because, in terms of a youth culture revolution, this was way more extreme than even the mods and the rockers. For the teddy boys, punk stood for everything they absolutely hated. These days everything is smoother; it evolves across boundaries and gets sucked into the whole general culture, but this was like an earthquake. People had come out of nowhere to threaten everything that the older generation stood for, and I don't think there's been anything quite as genuinely shocking since. Back then, the reaction to this new culture was to beat the shit out of the people who were into it.'

Sioux: 'When the Pistols played the Screen On The Green a second time [5 September 1976], I thought to myself, "It's all over." They were just another rock 'n' roll band and the sparkle of unpredictability had gone. They'd become just a package. The worst bit was when audiences started turning up with safety pins and light bulbs hanging from their ears. The whole scene had gone completely tabloid.'

15 December 1976
The Sex Pistols play Nôtre Dame Hall, London.

Severin: 'For me it ended with that performance. The band were great, but it was the audience that put me off. By this time there were, like, 300 people at the gigs. The Notre Dame show is the gig that you see the footage of most often, because it was one of the few that was actually filmed. Every time it's shown you see all these people pogoing at the front. I remember thinking, "Where did all these oiks come from? Where were they six months ago? And why are they acting like complete bozos at the front of the stage, spitting and all that nonsense?"

'I think The Damned started the gobbing thing by spitting at the audience. Pogoing and spitting just became part of the ritual for all those jumping on the punk bandwagon, and I didn't want anything to do with that. It was horrible. I stayed at the bar, clutching my only drink for the night. It was the first time I remember the media taking hold of something so quickly. And it had an immediate effect because by taking the cartoon element of it so many people began to pick up on it. It was no longer something Malcolm had control of. He was stirring it to a certain extent, but he was facilitating, rather than masterminding it.

3 'We Didn't Have Any Manifesto Other Than That We Were Wilfully Perverse And Anti-Everything'

– Steven Severin

SEVERIN: 'The Sex Pistols inspired us all. For the first time in my life I saw that anyone could do it. You didn't have to be able to play your instruments. Billy [Idol] had come back up from Sussex University, and he was threatening to form Chelsea with Tony James. That prompted us to talk about getting a group together. The plan was that Billy would play guitar, and teach me how to play bass, and that Siouxsie would sing. We didn't actually do anything about it, but the idea was always kicking around. By mid-'76, it seemed like a viable option.'

BERLIN: 'Shortly after we first met, I remember asking Siouxsie what she wanted to be, and she said, "A singer". I knew that she loved a range of women singers – Marlene Dietrich, Diana Ross, Yoko Ono, Nico, Patti Smith. But I said, "Don't you want to be an actress?"'

SIOUX: 'I was sure that I wanted to be in a band, and I'd already told Steven that. He and Simon had been thinking about it, too, but hadn't come out and said it. And it was getting obvious that the people in the bands weren't so different from us in the audience. I knew that Billy could play guitar, so we did [Velvet Underground's] "What Goes On" together on an old tape recorder.'

SEVERIN: 'It was a karaoke-type calling card that she could take with her to auditions. And, yes, she had that staccato voice from the start.'

SIOUX: 'Staccato like a Dalek? EX-TER-MIN-ATE! Well, I'd never made that connection! My vocal style was neither intended nor thought about; that's just the way it came out. Actually, most of the other bands could sing and play a little bit. They rehearsed and wrote songs. I was into the idea of being in a band despite having absolutely no experience or ability or songs. I wanted to take the ethos to its extreme.

'We were down at Louise's one night with the Pistols, Malcolm and Vivienne – the whole gang – sitting on this big leather settee that we'd claimed as our own. Malcolm was talking about a Punk Festival at the 100 Club in a few days' time that the Pistols were headlining. One of the support bands had pulled out so he was left with a slot to fill. Without thinking, I blurted out, "We'll play." Steven was up for it, too, so Malcolm agreed to let us do it. We didn't have a name. We didn't have a band either. So we had to find some people to join us.'

MARCO PIRRONI (guitarist): 'I'd been to Hyde Park with Philip [Salon], Debbie and Billy. Queen were playing a free show [18 September 1976], though I think we left before they came on. You can imagine how we looked walking through that crowd. I remember Philip being dressed up in green, like a big parrot, with green hair and a green sari. We all ended up at Billy Idol's quite posh family home in Bromley, by which time Steven and Sioux had joined us. I mentioned that I played guitar, and they asked me what I was doing in a couple of days' time. They said Malcolm had put them down on a poster as Suzi And The Banshees, and that they had to play. I thought they seemed a bit reluctant. Billy was supposed to play guitar but they weren't keen because he wanted to perform his own songs. Besides, Billy wanted to be a serious musician and Sioux and Steven couldn't play or sing, so he wasn't keen anyway. They already had Sid [Vicious] on drums. We agreed I would do it, then changed the subject.'

SEVERIN: 'The way I remember it was us being at Louise's one Saturday night and Billy had just called me to say that he couldn't do it because Tony James thought it would ruin his career. We knew Marco, and we vaguely knew Sid. But the catalyst was Nils [Stevenson]. He got everybody sitting round a table, then we went back to his mum's place in Finchley to discuss it further. I don't remember the Bromley meeting.'

SIOUX: 'I don't remember that night in Bromley at all, or Nils' enthusiasm at that early stage. But Marco's dead right about me not being at Hyde Park. I mean, what would I wanna go and see Queen for?'

BERLIN: 'There was a time when we'd all go to Louise's and drink and dance and pose. Later on it got boring, because people like Malcolm, Nils and Steven were always sitting around upstairs and not being up for a good time. They always looked as if they were plotting something. Sioux and Steven started to put the band together around the same time that they became a couple. Once they had that partnership, I think they also had a goal.'

MARCO PIRRONI: 'I didn't really understand the dynamics between Sioux and Severin. When I first met them, I wasn't sure if they were an item. They weren't touchy-feely, but then, for them to come along holding hands in those days would have been disgusting! They had attitude. We all had attitude. That's how we came together. The people in that scene weren't necessarily friends. We didn't necessarily even like each other. It's just that we hated each other less than we hated the rest of the world.'

SIOUX: 'Sid had been hanging around with the Pistols for ages and he was semi-notorious for beating up the [*NME*] journalist Nick Kent. His public persona was quite different from how he was in the flesh. I always thought he was really sweet and innocent. If Johnny Rotten had told him to put his hand in a fire he would have because he was so loyal to him. Rotten, like Malcolm, was one of those passive voyeurs who liked to instigate violence without getting involved in it himself. He used to surround himself with people who were nutters, or else really heavy, and Sid was one of them.'

SEVERIN: 'Sid was a lovable bloke really. Being around John, he was associated with that intimidating crew of characters that John mixed with, including people like Jah Wobble. With Wobble you knew the menace was real, but with Sid it was almost like he was playing around. He seemed a lot more middle class than the others, and I think he deliberately dumbed down to seem hard. "Sid Vicious" was a character rather than a real person. He never picked on anyone who wouldn't get him into the papers. Sid always chose his targets well.'

SIOUX: 'I got on well with Sid in those early days. I thought he was quite shy. That was before his personality was warped out of recognition by heroin. We used to sit at Louise's and rave about music and films and stuff. He was another big fan of Bowie's Low and bands like Kraftwerk, though his big passion was The Ramones. When their album came out it was his favourite immediately. We used to like the same things and sneer at the same things, so when he said he'd be in our band, I thought, "Great!"'

Severin: 'Sid had already got a group together called Flowers Of Romance but he hadn't unveiled it yet. He said he wanted to drum for us and that he had absolutely no ability as a drummer. That sounded absolutely brilliant to us, so we got him in.'

Sioux: 'Sid wanted to play drums and I wanted to sing. We knew Marco and the main point in his favour was that he actually had a guitar and knew how to play it. So he was in as well. And Steven was left with the bass. I don't think Malcolm cared that it was likely to be ramshackle, because there were about eight bands on the bill and we were on early.'

Sioux: 'We had three days to plan the whole thing. Sid had loads of contacts so we managed to borrow The Clash's rehearsal room in Camden Lock through him. We thought it might be a good idea to get a feel of what it would be like to actually hold instruments and how to plug them in. And we had to decide what songs we were going to play.

'One of our first ideas was to ruin a Beatles song like "She Loves You". Then there was a plan to have a go at a Bay City Rollers song like "Shang-A-Lang" or [Donny Osmond's] "Young Love", but I realised I didn't know the words. I loved 'Goldfinger', but we eventually settled for making a noise based around the Lord's Prayer. At least I knew the words to that, and I wanted to do something beastly around religion, trash a holy cow.'

Marco Pirroni: 'Three days! That would have been hard enough for professional musicians to get together, but for people who'd never played before, it was ridiculous. I don't know what we were thinking of! There was talk of doing "Goldfinger", but I said, "I can't play that, so you'll never even begin to be able to play it." They also came up with the theme from *Captain Scarlet*, which I thought that was a great idea, and possibly covers of songs we really hated like [Deep Purple's] "Smoke On The Water". But there was no way we could learn them in time.'

Severin: 'The Clash's bassist Paul Simonon and their manager Bernie Rhodes were at the rehearsal rooms and let us use their equipment. We banged around for about ten minutes, then Sid said, "That's enough." That was the rehearsal. It was more about learning how to plug everything in, to be honest – it was the first time I'd even picked up an instrument. I only knew what to do from watching other people. I don't think Marco even bothered to tune my bass, as we just wanted to make a racket.'

MARCO PIRRONI: 'I plugged in my guitar, turned this bizarre old amp up to ten, and it sounded fantastic. Then Sid sat down and said, "What are we gonna do?" Sioux said, "We thought we'd do 'Goldfinger'." "Fuck that,"said Sid, "Let's just make a noise." And that's what we did. Actually, that wasn't particularly daunting. It was like [Velvet Underground's] "I Heard Her Call My Name" or "Sister Ray". I knew how to make a load of feedback. I even had a big old semi-acoustic Gibson with f-holes, which I thought was like Lou Reed's. Maybe someone even suggested that – "Oh, do it just like 'Sister Ray'."'

SEVERIN: 'It was worth it just for the look of horror on Bernie's face as we struck up this cacophony. Paul [Simonon] was doing his best to look intense and interested, but I think he was just as flabbergasted.'

MARCO PIRRONI: 'Afterwards, we went to the pub across the street with Sid. Johnny Rotten turned up too. We agreed to meet next day at the 100 Club for the sound check. And that was it. That was how we prepared for our first gig, the first time any of us had ever played.'

20 September 1976

Siouxsie And The Banshees debut with a bottom-of-the-bill appearance alongside Stinky Toys, The Clash and The Sex Pistols at the first night of the Punk Festival at London's 100 Club in Oxford Street.

SIOUX: 'On the day of the gig I sat at home and got my outfit together. Black vinyl drainpipes, bondage shoes, a black T-shirt with a few slashes in it and, for some reason, a pair of scissors around my neck. I needed something on top of it so I borrowed my sister's black pinstripe jacket out of her wardrobe. It was lucky she was out of the country or she would have killed me. I also had a swastika armband and I'd painted a black star over one eye, which was supposed to look a bit *Clockwork Orange*. My hair was slicked back and had red stripes in it.

'A few days earlier, the film *Cry Of The Banshee* [1970] had been on the telly, so when the venue wanted to know what name we were going to use, I said, "Siouxsie And The Banshees". Although we'd been told to turn up for a sound check, we had no idea what that meant. I remember telling the soundman Dave Goodman that I wanted to sound really loud.

I'd been reading William Burroughs and I wanted something apocalyptic to happen like making people's guts fall out. I got in my head that if I taped three microphones together, that would automatically make me three times louder than anyone else. I even considered taping five together, but I reckoned that didn't look very good. I'd also wanted a lectern so it would look like I was giving a sermon, while I sang "The Lord's Prayer", but unfortunately that never happened.'

Marco Pirroni: 'Before the gig, we got thrown out of a pub in Wardour Street. We were draped in swastikas. I was wearing an Anarchy T-shirt with a swastika and Luftwaffe insignia on it. Siouxsie had the armband, Steven had a white shirt splattered in paint with a Union Jack pinned on the breast pocket and Sid had a yellow Belsen Babies T-shirt, which he'd customised by ripping the front out and adding stuff about Dr Mengele's experiments on the back.'

Sioux: 'We were meant to use The Clash's equipment but their manager Bernie Rhodes wouldn't let us because of all the swastikas. Everyone was wearing Marx and Lenin images at the time, and that was seen as OK, but that pesky old swastika was beyond the pale. Sid's customised T-shirt had "I Hate Jews" scrawled on it, not because he did, but simply to wind Bernie Rhodes up. We ended up using Subway Sect's equipment instead. Bernie managed them as well, but that was OK, apparently.

'I walked out on stage and the place was pretty full. I was screaming inside. I had this light shining on me and I just focused on that, not the audience. The performance must have come across as quite shocking and bizarre, because there weren't any female performers around at the time. Marco was the only one who could play, so he kind of held it all together. Sid was whacking his drums like [Velvet Underground's] Mo Tucker, just hammering out a repetitive beat, and Steven was nervously playing his bass. Marco went off into "Smoke On The Water" at one point. And I just screamed over the top of it all. Nothing went through my mind other than pure fear.'

Marco Pirroni: 'Sid's big joke was to do everything as badly as possible. Make it as boring as possible. The only thing I said to Steven was, "It's in E." I knew he didn't know what I was talking about, so I said, "The thick string! Just hit the thick string!" When we began, it sounded like a proper intro to a song, but as it went on everyone realised this wasn't just the intro – this was it! You could see these question marks coming out of people's heads: "What the fuck are they doing?" After about ten minutes, I'd done everything I could do, playing "Sister Ray" as Mick Ronson might have done it. So I started throwing in bits of songs we hated, like "Smoke On The Water", the worst riff ever.'

SEVERIN: 'The only thing I remember is experiencing 20 minutes of abject terror as we went through this total shambles. Actually, it was about 19 minutes of abject terror and one minute of thinking, "This feels quite good". It was interesting to see all these blank faces in the audience as we made this noise. I remember John Lydon hurtling through the crowd and pogoing his head off, in support of Sid, I guess.'

MARCO PIRRONI: 'Sid looked at me as if to say he was getting fed up. I motioned as if I wasn't sure whether to carry on or not, and he just stopped. Then the audience cheered, so we thought, "That must be it."'

SIOUX: 'I picked up my beer, got off stage and walked through the audience. There was a pause, then everyone started clapping. As I walked away, I had no idea I'd be doing this for the next 30 years. I thought, "OK, done that, now onto something else." It was like a chore I had to go through.'

SEVERIN: 'The first person who came up to us afterwards was Kenny Morris. "That was fantastic," he said. "I want to be your drummer."

KENNY MORRIS (drummer): 'I was absolutely thrilled. I don't even remember The Clash or the Pistols that night. Siouxsie improvised "The Lord's Prayer", throwing in bits from "Deutschland, Deutschland, Über Alles" and "Twist And Shout", just putting everyone down. And Sid was amazing. He always gets knocked, but he played perfectly in time. It was wonderful. I told him his playing reminded me of Maureen Tucker, and he went all shy like a puppy and he whispered, "Oh, thanks very much." That was his first and only time on drums. He never touched them again.'

SEVERIN: 'Nils [Stevenson], who was Malcolm's assistant, was next. He said he wanted to manage us. Then we went round the back of the club and told an *Evening Standard* journalist that we'd split up, we'd been and gone and that was it. Kenny and Nils wouldn't let it go and kept going on about there being something there worth pursuing. McLaren absolutely hated us, but Nils was already convinced that Siouxsie was a star. And he was right.'

Sioux: 'In the days after the gig, people kept saying we should play again. There were quite a few women in the audience – Viv Albertine, Palmolive and the rest of The Slits, Patti Paladin, even Chrissie Hynde.

'Sid was always going back to his band, Flowers Of Romance, and Marco had his own band, too, The Models. There was only me and Steven left. First of all we got a guitarist called PT Fenton and this really great-looking drummer called Dixon.'

Marco Pirroni: 'Dixon looked like a shop dummy, completely perfect, glamorously, fabulously weird. He scoured the country looking for old '50s and '60s clothes and then sold them to [King's Road retro boutique] Acme Attractions. He wasn't a punk; he was a clothes fetishist.'

Sioux: 'They both had their own gear, which got them the jobs, but even though we did some rehearsals it didn't really work out. We kept Fenton on, but Dixon was replaced by Kenny Morris.'

Kenny Morris: 'I came from Waltham Abbey in Essex. We all came from the suburbs. My dad got me this naff drum kit from a newspaper advert and I used to practise at weekends in a church hall. My friend John Maybury used to sing. One day, we played a gig in Turnpike Lane and a load of Hell's Angels turned up. We played a few Who covers and some of our own songs and we went down a storm. The gorillas would have killed us otherwise.

'In the sixth form, we'd been allowed to bring in our records, and all these kids were playing what their elder brothers listened to. There were a few of us who'd walk in with something different – Roxy Music, Marc Bolan, David Bowie – though it was while sniffing round the import section in the local music shop looking for the Velvet Underground records that John and I really got to know each other.

'My style of drumming was inspired by [Velvet Underground's] Maureen Tucker. The more I found out about her, the more besotted I became. She was my hero. I wasn't interested in conventional rock drumming at all. Cymbals? Forget it! When I turned up for my first rehearsal with the Banshees, I couldn't even set the kit up. I was only interested in playing the drums beat for beat to what Siouxsie was doing. I kept to the voice, and I kept the cymbals right out of it.'

Sioux: 'Kenny was amazing when he played. He was very tall and gangly, and he played the drums like a marionette. His whole leg would come up as he hit the bass drum. He looked like he was being operated by a puppeteer.'

24 February 1977
The second gig, supporting The Heartbreakers at the Red Deer, Croydon.

Sioux: 'We opened and closed with the theme from *Captain Scarlet* and the set probably lasted no longer than 20 minutes. We only had about five songs. Steven wrote nearly all the lyrics for those early songs, like "Scrapheap" and "Psychic", but in those days "Captain Scarlet" was our most popular song. I loved the theme music from all those Gerry Anderson series, and I was inspired by the fact that Captain Scarlet was a plastic man. It was my first attempt at writing, though I hardly wrote at all at the beginning. I'd only ever written a diary.

'The scene was pretty much based in central London, so we liked the idea of getting as far away as possible so that nobody we knew might actually come and see us. The suburbs seemed safe because everyone there was totally clueless. Later, we played the Roxy Club pretty regularly and picked up a hard-core following. We did our own flyers so we were creating a public image. And we were already notorious and in the music press a lot, I think, because of the 100 Club Punk Festival.'

Severin: 'Track Records had signed The Heartbreakers so Nils, who was on a retainer there, managed to get some desk space from where he could work on getting some interest in us. We did our first demos in a tiny little studio there [12 March]. We plugged straight into the wall. ["Bad Shape", "Scrapheap", "Psychic" and "Love In A Void", plus versions of the Captain Scarlet television theme, T. Rex's "20th Century Boy" and "The Lord's Prayer" were all recorded there.]

'By that point we'd started to come to terms with being a proper group. Once it was obvious that there were avenues open to us, that there were people interested in us, it became easier to take the whole thing seriously. If we learned to play our instruments and write songs, we could play gigs. The next thing was to embark on a quest that we'd repeat time and time again throughout our career – to find the right band members.'

Sioux: 'Fenton really didn't fit in. He had an orange lead on his guitar and that really annoyed me. He was a real rock guitarist, always trying to put guitar licks into songs and pulling funny faces when he played. We spent most of our time trying to make him forget what he'd learned. The repetitive, mesmeric drone of Velvet Underground was the blueprint for what we wanted, but he wasn't having any of that.'

19 May 1977
Dingwalls, Camden, North London.

Sioux: 'Kenny didn't shown up for the sound check. We rang him but there was no answer, so Nils drove me and Severin round to his squat in Battersea and were told that he had the flu and was in bed. He seemed to think it was OK not to turn up or bother to tell us, so I dragged him out of bed and told him to do the gig or die. He played, but it turned out to be our last gig with Fenton, who we sacked on stage. He'd gone into this terrible wailing guitar solo in the middle of a song, so I said, "That is fucking shit" and pulled the lead out of his guitar. Afterwards, we had this enormous fight backstage. The management at Dingwall's told us, "You'll never work here again."'

Severin: 'The only surviving footage with Fenton was filmed one afternoon for Derek Jarman's *Jubilee*. We appear on a television screen doing "Love In A Void" going into "The Lord's Prayer". We'd seen the Pistols play at designer Andrew Logan's studio a few months earlier, and Zandra Rhodes, Duggie Fields, Jarman and that whole crowd were there. I hated that lot at the time because they seemed to completely miss the point. It wasn't an art thing; it was much more visceral.'

Sioux: '*Jubilee* was being talked up as the big film about the scene and we were going to do some songs for the soundtrack. Once we realised it was just an art film, we didn't see why we should do anything for it.'

KENNY MORRIS: 'John Maybury and I worked on *Jubilee* as assistant set designers, and I was getting paid £60 a week for it in the middle of summer. It was a daytime job, and, as the band never rehearsed much, it didn't interfere. We made our music at sound checks anyway, that's how things happened. I was studying for a degree in Fine Art and Graphics at Camberwell College, too. It was the best college in London and I'd worked hard to get there. But, eventually, I had to discuss the band situation with the head of the college. He said, "If you don't do it, you're always gonna be curious." It was such a hard decision. I sat on a bench outside the Half Moon pub in World's End and cried my eyes out.'

SEVERIN: 'Kenny was still trying to decide whether he wanted to join the band full-time or continue at art school. Meanwhile, it was his best mate, John Maybury, who came up with John McKay. McKay was a tall, black-haired bloke who he'd seen skulking around the college not talking to anybody, and Maybury thought, "Hey, he should be a Banshee." We got introduced, and he seemed right for the job.'

SIOUX: 'When I met John I thought he looked great. He had a wonderful face and great hair. He needed a bit of work, though. I remember he turned up wearing plastic soul-boy sandals, and I thought, "They've got to go." I played him the soundtracks from *Psycho* and *The Omen* and told him that was the sound we wanted. I wanted music to be exciting, but with a sense of fear, of uneasiness to it. We didn't want the guitar to sound like a guitar. It had to sound like stabbing violins, and he seemed to be into that. We finally had the line-up that gave us the opportunity to shape our own sound.'

11 July 1977
John McKay debuts at the Vortex, central London.

SIOUX: 'I don't remember many early reviews, but I do remember Glen Matlock being quoted after we'd played the Vortex. He said, "I don't know what it is, but it's not rock 'n' roll." He thought that was an insult, but for us it was the biggest compliment anyone could have paid us.'

GLEN MATLOCK: 'They were quite pleased, though that wasn't exactly my intention! I didn't 100 per cent dig what they were trying to do, but then I preferred them to, say, Bees Make Honey or Clodagh Rodgers. My musical thing with the Pistols was based in '60s pirate radio. Maybe they didn't get good reception in Bromley, but their music just wasn't blokey enough for me. I liked The Faces because they played football on stage. The Banshees wouldn't have got anywhere today, but at that time the door was ajar for people trying to be a bit more left-field.'

SEVERIN: 'We stepped into the void that had been left by the Pistols because they weren't allowed to play anywhere. For a lot of people we were probably the first "punk" band they ever saw live. Musically, we were very different from the Pistols, but then there was a huge diversity of sound among all the bands. No one sounded like Subway Sect, or The Buzzcocks, or even The Clash, at that point.

'We didn't have any manifesto other than that we were wilfully perverse and anti-everything. The only band we had any affinity with in attitude at all was the Pistols. Musically we liked Wire and The Buzzcocks, but that was about it. We hated the Stiff Records lot, who were a mixture of pub rock and horrible American pop. They were the greatest enemy of all. I couldn't think of anything worse than Elvis Costello singing in an American accent.'

SIOUX: 'If anyone even thought of describing us as a punk band we would scream denials at them. What we were doing and what we wanted to do was a world away from the cartoon punk thing it had all become.'

BERLIN: 'When they got the band together, I said, "Is it gonna be like punk or something?" Siouxsie said, "Oh, no, it's gonna be pop music." I don't think it was pop music as people knew it.'

SIOUX: 'Earlier on, we'd experimented with our friend Simone, who had a violin, but it wasn't the sound we had in our heads. Once John came on board, and played his guitar the way he did, we started writing in earnest. "Suburban Relapse" was one of the first and is definitely the *Psycho* shower scene transformed into song, along with the lyrics of one of my suburban psycho dramas.'

GLEN MATLOCK: 'Kenny and John were a bit more musical. The band became proper when those guys joined. They realised that, somewhere along the line, it's gotta get real.'

SIOUX: 'Around the time of the Vortex gigs, Dave Woods became our first booker and I got taken to my first restaurant, a Berni Steak House. Very posh. We had been signing on, but as we did more gigs someone at the dole office snitched on us so our benefit was stopped. We were pretty much living hand-to-mouth, existing on booze, the odd Wimpy and the tenner that Nils would bung us every now and then. It sounds really simplistic, but as long as we weren't starving we were happy. The best thing of all was playing gigs. Almost instantly, I discovered what a drug performing was.

'My brother came to see us at the Vortex and he loved it. I'd been really nervous about him coming down, especially as he was eight years older. He became a huge fan after that. A couple of years later, he had this championship-winning bowling team which he'd named The Scream.'

MARCO PIRRONI: 'The Banshees were notorious for never having any equipment. Kenny had some drumsticks, Steven had some shit bass and that was it. They were always poncing gear off people when they gigged.'

Sioux 'The scam was that we'd arrive at the gig and say that the van with all our gear had broken down and please could we borrow the support band's equipment. It worked every time!'

4 August 1977
Rebecca's, Birmingham.

BILLY 'CHAINSAW' HOULSTON (fan): 'I'd read this article which basically called the Banshees the worst band in the world. The photo suggested otherwise, and anyway, I didn't trust what other people said. When the Banshees came to Birmingham, first to Rebecca's, then, a month later, to Barbarella's, I was blown away. They were so different. I'd tired of punk very quickly. It was only a few steps away from pub rock, really. But there always seemed a lot more to the Banshees. I chatted to them afterwards, and having just played a set with everyone shouting, "Show us your tits!", I must have been a breath of fresh air to them. The first thing I ever said to Sioux was, "What's it really like down in London?" She replied, "You ought to come down and see us some time." From then on, I saw them every time they played, hitchhiking all round the country.'

SIOUX: 'We got banned from a lot of London venues like the Marquee without ever having played there, because they didn't want anything controversial. They wanted to promote traditional pub-rock bands like Dr Feelgood and Eddie And The Hot Rods. But when we played up north, sometimes it would be like civil war. They told us to fuck off back to London.'

SEVERIN: 'Just playing anywhere north of London was like going to Beirut. Places like Hitchin, St Albans, Watford, Enfield, Luton, all those small towns. They were really violent gigs. At the Nag's Head in High Wycombe they had the grace to wait until Kenny was clearing away his drum kit before they threw the first glass. You could guarantee that at just about every gig there'd be a fight by the end of the third song. Someone would try to drag Siouxsie into the audience. She'd kick them, Kenny would jump over his drum kit and pile in, and it would all go off. And we were being constantly spat at. They were fairly intense experiences. I didn't really get involved in the fights myself, although I did whack a few people with my bass. You could get a nice swing with it.'

SIOUX: 'At one gig in Newcastle, some guy decided to squirt a soda siphon at me. I jumped into the audience and chased him around the venue whirling my microphone around my head. I got him really hard on the back of the head with the mike – very satisfying. We never incited the violence, but we seemed to be on the receiving end of it fairly regularly. I admit that I was excited by it, because it was so cathartic. Anyone who spat at me or behaved like a "punk" just incensed me, so I'd kick them or hit them with the mike stand. We didn't know any different. We thought that was just what happened when you played gigs.'

SEVERIN: 'We stayed in a B&B in Tynemouth that night, and the next morning I walked out to the cliffs overlooking the North Sea, where I began the lyric for "Voices". I'd been reading Baudelaire's *Hashish, Wine And Opium*, in which he talks about seeing sound and hearing colours, and I'd recently seen one of Roger Corman's Edgar Allan Poe adaptations, *The Haunted Palace*. Siouxsie and I were really into Poe at the time and I wanted to try and recreate that "suffocating" motif he used so often. This reappeared in "Premature Burial", one of Siouxsie's lyrics for *Join Hands*. We thought in tandem a lot in those early years'.

KENNY MORRIS: 'Sometimes we'd get a pleasant surprise at a concert, like the night Marc Bolan came to see us at London's Music Machine. He'd been invited because we were doing a cover version of "20th Century Boy", though he wasn't doing very well at the time. I have a photo taken that night where Paul Cook, Nils and a couple of others have their arms around Marc, and you could see how unhappy he was. But he walked up to me and said, "I loved your drumming." All I could say back was, "I love you too!" John Maybury was close by, and I winked at him as if to say, "Aren't you fucking jealous!"'

SIOUX: 'I know Marc Bolan was really excited about us playing "20th Century Boy", but they did have to nudge him and say, "Well, this is it!" He'd lined us up to be next on his TV series, but then the fatal crash [16 September] happened. There was some talk about him producing us, though I was secretly hoping he'd play guitar.'

26 September 1977

A short European jaunt climaxes with a show at the Paradiso, Amsterdam.

SEVERIN: 'The idea was that we'd do a few nights on our own in a club in Paris, then go to Amsterdam to support The Clash. It all looked good on paper, but the reality was completely different. By the end of that week we were close to starvation. All the organisers gave us to eat was a plate of ham and eggs at the end of the gig, and that was it. And they'd put us up in a disgusting, cockroach-filled hotel. It was a completely grim experience.'

KENNY MORRIS: 'It was the first time we'd been out of the country and we had no money. We were starting a four-night residency at this club in Paris and, as we went into the first song, I hit the tom-tom really hard. The fucking thing lifted off the frame, hit the floor, and with her sharp-toed foot Siouxsie booted it out into the crowd and straight into the lap of the drummer who'd lent us the kit. Nils had to ply them with drink by way of an apology. But we did write "Pure" while we were there. We probably played it the same night we worked it out during the sound check.'

SIOUX: "While we were there, we managed to see Iggy Pop play in this field under a red-and-white circus tent. We arrived just as "The Passenger" was playing. We were all madly into *The Idiot*, so that was a magical moment hearing that wafting through the air.'

20 October 1977
The Banshees' first major gig at the Rainbow Theatre, London.

Sioux: 'Going out on our first tour opening for Johnny Thunders' Heartbreakers really raised our public profile. We started to get friends in the press. Meanwhile, Nils would bring along A&R men from record companies, but we just used to insult them from the stage. They used to wear medallions and satin Bee Gees tour jackets.'

Severin: 'In the beginning Nils was like a fifth member of the band. He persuaded Siouxsie and I to keep going, scrounged rehearsal time, office space and stuff like that. We trusted him and, quite frankly, we needed him. But he was completely seduced by Johnny Thunders And The Heartbreakers and that whole smack thing.'

Sioux: 'There was a lot of camaraderie in the early days. That was probably because you couldn't go anywhere without fear of being attacked. The police would hassle you too. After the Rainbow show, we were waiting for our taxis home when the meat wagon turns up. They started picking on 999's drummer, so I start telling them to go and solve some real crimes. It turned into a fight and, before we knew it, me, Kenny and Les were shoved into the van and I spent a night in Holloway Prison.'

Sioux: 'When The Heartbreakers moved to London is when heroin started to seep into the punk scene. They had this flat in Denbigh Street in Pimlico. I was so completely naive about smack that I didn't even realise Nils was doing it. I remember going round there once and thinking, "I wonder why there's all this blood up the walls?" I knew that men cut themselves shaving, but this was ridiculous. There were quite a few people on the scene doing speed, but something like heroin seemed so totally alien to what we'd grown up with.

'If there was any drug that fuelled the whole thing, it was booze. There was an awful lot of drinking. Drugs like heroin were seen by many of us as being a sad old hippie thing, but, at the same time as they were saying that, a load of people were secretly mainlining. Sid was like that.

Half the time he'd be railing against the "fucking hippies". The rest of the time he'd be getting zonked out in the toilets.'

Severin: 'Musically I never particularly liked The Heartbreakers. It was a bit too rock 'n' roll for me, but, as people, I got along pretty well with them. To their great credit, they never tried to get Siouxsie or I into the whole drugs thing, and what they did themselves was all done behind closed doors. Having read William Burroughs in my early teens, I didn't find the heroin world the slightest bit glamorous anyway. Besides, we were much more focused on what we were trying to achieve with the band.'

Sioux: 'We did two early John Peel sessions. When the first one went out [5 December 1977], it was a huge thrill hearing ourselves for the first time. That we still didn't have a record deal made it seem even stranger. Peel and [his producer] John Walters were always very supportive of us. They'd come to see us at Croydon Greyhound [9 October 1977] and I think that when they met us they thought I was funny. But it was so frustrating. We were selling out places like The Roundhouse [11 December 1977] but still didn't have a deal. At one point, we were seriously considering whether to sign to BBC Records.'

Severin: 'Around the time of the first Peel broadcast, *Sounds* had decided to do a two-week profile on what they called "New Muzik". One issue featured Devo and Pere Ubu; Siouxsie was on the cover the following week. At that point it seemed like everything was going to plan and that our record deal would be right round the corner. The response to the radio session was so good that we just assumed it would be a springboard for the next stage of our career.'

Sioux: 'We picked up a publishing deal before we got a record contract. All I can think is that record companies saw no future in the concept of a woman fronting a band – or at least a woman with an attitude. The Sex Pistols were rooted in a rock 'n' roll tradition. They were just The Who or The Small Faces with an edge, whereas what we were doing didn't fit into anything they could relate to quite so easily. Perhaps they thought if they didn't sign us we'd go away.'

Severin: 'EMI were interested for a while, but then they said they wanted control over our lyrics. That sounds extraordinary now, but at the time it was something they genuinely thought we'd agree to.'

15 February 1978
Employees of all the major London-based record companies turn up for work to find their premises defaced by a prominent slogan: 'SIGN THE BANSHEES – DO IT NOW!'

SIOUX: 'I think our roadie Les did that. He had blond hair and a leather jacket with "SIOUXSIE" marked out in studs. He and Steve Strange were our first real hard-core fans. It was great to have these two blond-haired guys in leathers standing right in front of the stage. No one dared touch them. I remember them from the first gigs at the Roxy and they travelled everywhere to see us.'

SEVERIN: 'He didn't just scrawl it, he chiselled it – right into the wall by the door of the CBS building!'

SEVERIN: 'On that second Peel session [23 February 1978], we played "Hong Kong Garden" for the first time. One of Polydor's A&R men told me he was sitting listening to the radio in the bath and as soon as he heard the song he knew it was a hit. He was probably sitting in the bath wearing a satin bomber jacket with "Sutherland Brothers & Quiver" embroidered on the back, but at least someone was showing some belief in us.

'There were very few independent record labels around at that time, so there weren't many outlets for releasing records other than by signing to a major. And, coming from the Malcolm McLaren school of thought, Nils' dream was to get this band that hardly even knew how to play their instruments, and had mercilessly crucified "The Lord's Prayer", onto a major label.

'Nils wouldn't entertain the idea of talking to Geoff Travis, who ran Rough Trade, at that point the only real independent label. In his eyes, that was defeat. He wanted us to get an enormous advance and go off and do spectacular things. Seeing contemporaries like The Buzzcocks releasing records and getting into the charts set the benchmark for what we aimed to achieve. I found their success hugely inspirational. I didn't begrudge them anything. I remember thinking, "If they can do it, so can we."'

9 June 1978
Sign to Polydor.

GEORGE MCMANUS (Head of Marketing, Polydor Records): 'I can remember going into work and seeing the wall outside sprayed with the words, "Sign The Banshees." I knew that somebody would have to do it, and it was (Head of A&R) Alan Black who went out on a limb. I think the graffiti on the walls helped considerably, but when we heard "Hong Kong Garden", we all went potty. It was a brilliant record.'

SEVERIN: 'It would be nice to say that there were dozens of labels competing for our signature, but the truth is that Polydor were the only ones in the frame, so they got us. You'd think that by seeing how many people were coming to our shows they'd have realised they were on to a guaranteed moneymaker. But there was still a sizeable representation of the old guard at the label, people who were convinced that all the new bands coming along in the wake of the Pistols were just a fad. You'd talk to them for five minutes and then they'd tell you how excited they were that Little Feat were coming over from America. We saw more beards and medallions than could have been entirely healthy.

'Nils tended to do all the day-to-day business and kept us out of the equation, which was probably the wisest thing to do. We didn't want to waste our time in meetings. What we wanted to do was make records. Not that Nils was perfect at being the diplomat. Every now and then he'd get pissed and tell them what he thought of them. It was never an easy ride.'

GEORGE MCMANUS: 'The band had great principles – No Musical Compromise. They had genuine self-belief. There was a revolution in the record industry with a new world coming up, and we realised there was no point trying to tell a band who know exactly what they are what to do.

'Not long after they were signed, we had them in for a big "Meet The Banshees"-type international meeting at a hotel in London. The Dutch MD was flattering Siouxsie, telling her, "It's so great to have you here. I was going to sign you when you did 'The Lord's Prayer'." And I heard her reply, "Why the fuck didn't you?"'

4 'We Were Making Songs Out Of Obsession And Psychosis. We Were Making Soundtracks For The Films In Our Heads'

– Siouxsie Sioux

August 1978
'Hong Kong Garden'.

SIOUX: 'We knew "Hong Kong Garden" was a single because it was poppy and stood out from everything else we'd done. It was a song I'd mentally dedicated to my local Chinese takeaway in Chislehurst High Street, which opened when I was 12 or so and at a time when there were loads of skinheads around. I was so sorry for the racist abuse that the people who worked there used to get. I always wished I was Emma Peel and that I could beat the shit out of the skinheads. But the first recording of the song was atrocious.'

SEVERIN: 'It seems incredible to think that after such a long delay in signing we didn't have a producer in mind, but my candidates, heroes like Brian Eno and John Cale, had temporarily lost their minds. They were off working with Ultravox and Sham 69.

'We got given this American soul producer, Bruce Albertine, and having only ever done demos in tiny places we were in Olympic Studios in Barnes with a complete stranger who had absolutely no understanding of what we were about. We had no option but go ahead and do the song with him, and when we heard it back we were horrified. Nils knew Steve Lillywhite, who was working on Johnny Thunders' solo album, so we used him instead. He was only an engineer then, but Nils thought he was really good.'

SIOUX: 'We recorded that session at Mickie Most's RAK Studios and it was the first time I'd heard my voice treated with multi-tracking and stuff. It was a revelation. When we heard the finished version of "Hong Kong Garden" I was astounded. I couldn't believe it was us.'

SEVERIN: 'The choice of "Voices" as the B-side was entirely deliberate. Both Sioux and I loved B-sides, especially if they were non-album tracks. Roxy Music did that a lot. We wanted to showcase the more extreme side of the band. Apparently, it was a jukebox favourite amongst publicans in Liverpool. Put on "Voices" at drinking-up time and you'd instantly clear the bar!'

SIOUX: "That was the one thing we salvaged from the Bruce Albertine session, and in a perfect world it would have been the A-side. "Hong Kong Garden" was so commercial and light, but "Voices" certainly wasn't. It was very much a spontaneous creation. We certainly never rehearsed it.

SEVERIN: 'The artwork for the single was a bit of a struggle because Polydor insisted on it being done in-house. I found a picture for "Hong Kong Garden" that I'd seen in a magazine. I thought it would be interesting to have an image of a girl hiding her face – the opposite of what people might have expected to see on the sleeve. I'm sure they'd have loved a picture of Siouxsie on the cover, but they weren't going to get it.'

SIOUX: 'We got amazing reviews for the single, and it got to No.7 in the charts. For the first time in my life I was doing something I was good at, something I really enjoyed. That was a very powerful feeling.'

SEVERIN: 'It was fortuitous that we chose to release "Hong Kong Garden" as our debut because it gave us leverage for everything else that followed. If our single was selling a quarter of a million copies, and the label's other acts weren't, they had no choice other than to change allegiances to us. It wasn't easy, though. Just after the single came out, we walked into Polydor one day and there was this mock-up of a compilation album they were putting out. It had a dolly bird in a fright wig on the cover and was called something like *Your Mother Wouldn't Like It*. On the back there was a track-listing with The Jam, someone else and us on it. We said there was no way we were having our track on something like that and made them take it off. They were reluctant at first, but Siouxsie threatened violence and that did the trick.'

SIOUX: 'I'd become a lot more confident about singing in the studio, but I hadn't really got the hang of controlling all the energy and the tension inside me that I wanted to get out. It was still pretty raw, but the most important thing was that singing was an exorcism for me. Steve Lillywhite was very encouraging. Most people would say, "That's not singing, that's just a horrible noise"'

SEVERIN: 'I walked into RAK the day we started work on *The Scream* and there were dozens of reels of two-inch tape stacked by the console window. They were recordings of Yes jam sessions that probably ended up as a quadruple album. My great regret is that I didn't have the foresight to run a magnet down them and erase everything. I could have saved the world a lot of pain.

'Siouxsie had brought along the first album by Jonathan Richman And The Modern Lovers and she told Lillywhite, "Get the tom-toms sounding like that." Because we weren't trained musicians we could only use records we liked as reference points. She brought in The Velvet Underground's "White Light White Heat" as well, and we said we wanted that guitar sound. Steve Lillywhite had his notes to work from, but he wasn't radical enough for me. He was kinda commercial and that was anathema to us.'

KENNY MORRIS: 'Lillywhite was young, excitable and always smiling. When he was at the desk he was like a jockey, moving and grooving, stabbing away at everything. John McKay and I appreciated that. We trusted him.'

SEVERIN: 'We were able to play our instruments by then which helped. It's surprising how quickly we became comfortable with songwriting and recording. I vividly remember playing the bass one day and thinking, "This is so easy. There is no excuse for anyone to ever write a bad song." It really did seem that simple. I'd grown up being told that if you wanted to be in a group you had to spend years copying Eric Clapton. It was a relief to realise it had all been a lie.

'I don't know if the music we were making was necessarily more sophisticated than any of our contemporaries, but we probably had more sophisticated tastes. Bowie, Roxy, Marc Bolan, the Velvets, Captain Beefheart and Frank Zappa had all influenced us, though there was no plan to write determinedly sophisticated songs. We may still have been struggling to play our instruments, though we were stretching our imaginations. We thought more about arrangements and tempos than other bands, simply because we didn't want to make ordinary songs.'

11 October 1978
A six-week sell-out tour begins at the Pavilion, Hemel Hempstead.

SEVERIN: 'Shortly into the tour, we turned up at Glasgow Apollo in a stretch black Mercedes. This obviously incensed the "real" punks because, when we came out after sound-checking, they'd dumped a rubbish bin on the hood of the car and scratched "Capitalast [*sic*] ba..." down the side. We found it hilarious and it became a catchphrase for years to come. Our security men weren't taking any chances, though, so when we finished the gig we ran straight out the back door into an inconspicuous van with towels over our heads. I remember saying, "We've arrived. I feel like David Cassidy!"'

SIOUX: 'We didn't give a fuck what they thought.'

SEVERIN: 'Our attitude to fans was the complete opposite of The Clash's. We wanted as little contact as possible, whereas The Clash would invite fans back to sleep in their hotel rooms. I'm sure everyone thought we were completely snooty but we really didn't care. Our first big feature in *Sounds* was headlined "The Most Elitist Band In The World" and I took that as a compliment. We couldn't understand anyone who would go on stage and not think that they were the best band in the world. We were often accused of being arrogant, but why start off being humble? Most important of all, we delivered. If I hadn't been in the Banshees I'm sure I would have been a fan because we were everything I was looking for in a band.

'Nico supported us at the beginning of the tour. As Velvets fans we thought it was a great coup to have got her, but, because our audience was mostly pop, they hated her and her harmonium. She only did about half a dozen dates before she got sick of being booed offstage and quit.'

Billy Chainsaw: 'The Banshees always stuck their necks out with support bands, but a lot of fans didn't get it. To them, she was just some old woman wailing along on an instrument that they'd never seen before.'

Severin: 'She was pretty out of it on smack around that time and, I have to admit, a rather sad, shuffling figure. We also got The Human League, Cabaret Voltaire and Spizz Oil in, so it was still a good line-up.'

Phil Oakey (Human League): 'I didn't understand the Banshees at all until the third or fourth date on the tour when, standing at the side of the stage, I suddenly got it. To me, punk sounded like skiffle or protest music. The Clash and The Damned played really simple rock 'n' roll, Buddy Holly-era stuff with tougher lyrical themes. The Banshees were different, unique. The four of them made something that's not been seen before or since. They were all born to be in that band.'

Sioux: 'We'd got something of a reputation for being difficult by then, but that was mainly because we didn't suffer fools gladly. We did a recording of BBC's *Old Grey Whistle Test* and spent most of our time screaming at the cameramen to stop shooting close-ups of fingers over guitar frets and to take away the red and green lights. We had a very precise idea of what we wanted and I don't think they were used to that. We weren't being difficult; we just hated sloppiness.

'For TV performances and stage shows we'd started to use blue and white lights. We liked starkness, the way it was reminiscent of old black-and-white films, a very strong, filmic image. It was important for there to be nothing happy or jolly going on. Smiling was only allowed when things fucked up.'

Kenny Morris: 'We were grumpy, the lot of us.'

Phil Oakey: 'There was something about Siouxsie that suggested no nonsense. I'd been a hospital porter, and suddenly I was in the presence of these people who seemed to do everything properly. There didn't seem to be any half measures with them. They felt the same way we did: that music and visuals were both really important.'

KENNY MORRIS: 'Siouxsie was our star, our Wonder Woman. We all knew that. But we always made sure we got interviewed together because each of us contributed so much. We were such a tight unit, and it was fantastic when it was like that. John and I felt like we'd met our kindred spirits. We were so close. When Siouxsie broke up with Steven in the middle of *The Scream* tour, I went to her room and said, "We're here for you," because the most important thing to me was that the group stayed together. "We won't let anything happen," I said.'

SEVERIN: 'Nils made it clear that he felt that our relationship was affecting the democracy of the band and, in a way, he encouraged me to split with Sioux, in order to maintain the balance. But he was wrong. My relationship with Sioux didn't get in the way of the band. Quite the reverse. In terms of coming up with the concepts and bringing them to fruition, it was absolutely vital to the identity of the band.'

November 1978
The Scream.

SEVERIN: 'We took an age to work out the running order over two sides of an album, from the calling-card howl of "Pure" to The Manson Family version of "Helter Skelter", then opening side two with the acoustic "Mirage" and ending with "Switch", a signal to where we were headed. Right from the start we tried to be timeless. None of the songs were about current affairs. That was deliberate, as I saw that as the downfall of a lot of so-called "punk" bands.

'When I listen to *The Scream* I hear the band physically struggling to play the songs that had come from our imagination, and that tension is one of the great strengths of the record. A lot of production went into it, as well – it's the mixture of the raw and the sophisticated that gives it its power. It's a perfect snapshot of where we were at that time and, in hindsight, waiting so long to make the record was an absolute blessing.'

SIOUX: 'Everyone thought that the album title was inspired by Munch's painting, but it came from a Burt Lancaster film I'd seen, called *The*

Swimmer, about a guy who swims his way across America through people's swimming pools. It has this brilliant final scene where he's absolutely exhausted and he's ploughing through a pool full of kids who are jumping all over him. It was the last leg of a huge journey, and a celebration of sorts, but a celebration caught up in a cacophony of noise and activity, of exhaustion and near-drowning. That was the spirit that I wanted the album to have.'

Severin: 'The album deliberately had a completely un-punk sleeve. We had no intention of using blackmail writing like the Pistols. We wanted something clean and stark that matched the look of the band. At the time, we all wore black. Siouxsie would wear an occasional flash of white or blue, but that was all. No other colours were allowed. I liked the kind of Beat thing about wearing black. It was the way the Velvets had dressed and I always thought that looked great. It's a very common look now, but back then it was unusual and set us apart from anyone else.'

Billy Chainsaw: 'That line-up – Sioux, Steven, John and Kenny – was the best. There had been nothing like it. They were the best-looking band I'd ever seen, and they sounded like nobody else.'

Severin: 'Did we feel like the ultimate rock band? Yes, absolutely. When I look at those early pictures now, they do look iconic. We got our style together very quickly. The difficulty was following up that first success and working out how to approach the second album when we'd spent two years honing the first one.'

Sioux: 'It was great to be able to walk into the Polydor offices for the Christmas party like we owned the place. It was a white Christmas that year and we were holed up writing songs for the second album. The band was pretty much our life at that point. Everything in our world was focused on the Banshees. We had so many ideas. It seemed like anything was possible.'

March 1979
'The Staircase (Mystery)'.

Severin: 'The first cracks began to appear around the time of "The Staircase (Mystery)". Everything was completely hunky-dory until then.

We were on a mission. Yes, Siouxsie and I had started the band, so it was our band, but we tried to make sure that everyone's opinion was listened to. But Kenny tended to run around in circles never saying very much. He'd say, "We need visuals." Siouxsie and I and Nils would say, "We've got no money, so let's concentrate on the next gig. All that can happen in time."'

Kenny Morris: 'When The Human League supported us, they had slides and stuff and I remember thinking, "That's what I want." The Banshees were so important to me. I could play the fucking drums the way I wanted to and all that, but I wanted much more.'

Sioux: 'John and Kenny thought of it as an art concept. For me it was always much more visceral, it was about the purity of making and performing music. The only times I can remember disagreeing with them were when they were being too precious about what we were doing. They worried about how everything would be perceived, and that baggage started to weigh heavier. I can see how difficult it must have been for them. We always said that the band was about four individuals, which it was, so long as John and Kenny agreed with me and Severin! Our friendship was rock-solid, just as Nils' friendship was too. Inevitably, there was a common ground between the three of us, whereas Kenny and John had come in later.'

Kenny Morris: 'I didn't trust Nils from the start. He was into drugs, jacking up with The Heartbreakers in the loo at the Roxy when we were barely earning £5 a day. Siouxsie and Steven didn't really partake. John and I would smoke the odd joint. We did acid once and it was fantastic, but not when we were playing. It was Nils who told us we only had a limited amount of time in the studio to record *Join Hands*. The only reason he got [Marc Bolan's *Dandy In The Underworld* engineer] Mike Stavrou in was so he could get a co-production credit and claim royalties.'

Sioux: 'In hindsight, maybe Nils was a little to blame, but he wasn't around all the time. Let's give him credit where credit's due: he worked hard in getting a sound for John's guitar. He had been the Pistols' guitar roadie and he knew a lot more about pedals and amps than we did.

'Those grievances could have been discussed with me or Severin. John and Kenny were very distrustful of Nils, and the more they huddled together in their own clique, the more they used to annoy me. They were like two old ladies. I started calling them Connie and Jenny.

'Most annoying of all, when I took the piss, they never shouted back. They just sulked or stormed off. My way of dealing with that was just to bait them even more. I began to get more childish with my pranks. I just wanted to get some sort of response. Everything got very petty.'

Severin: 'Siouxsie and I had both come from roughly the same area, and we had a lot of friends in common, plus we had all the friends we'd made from the beginning of the Pistols thing. John and Kenny were part of a slightly different crowd, more the art-school bunch, so we never really socialised together much. On top of that, John never really got on with Nils, and John's girlfriend had become a fairly disruptive element, so we were definitely forming into two camps. When me, Siouxsie and Nils used to spend time with Dave Woods, talking about how we were going to conquer the world, John and Kenny were never present, mainly because they weren't particularly interested. Yet, rather than addressing any problems, John and Kenny withdrew and became uncommunicative. We'd have all these great plans and be thinking about the band 24 hours a day, whereas they would skulk off back to Wembley to smoke dope.'

Sioux: 'We went into Air Studios on Oxford Street to record *Join Hands* in May. By June we were mixing it, and by July we were listening to the finished version. That was how fast everything worked.'

Severin: 'When Nils said, "This has to happen now," me and Siouxsie would say, "OK, we'll make the best of what we can do." But John and Kenny would complain, "Why does that have to happen now?" If they had their way, *Join Hands* wouldn't have come out for another six or nine months. They couldn't get on with the idea of deadlines and schedules, whereas Siouxsie and I adapted to that very fast.

'Neither were they happy with the mixing, or with the amount of material we had to choose from. They felt increasingly sidelined, but it wasn't about "three against two". History shows that we were right. They haven't done anything of any note since – not because they're not talented, but because they wouldn't get organised. It was always gonna crack because you can't be idealistic. You can't behave like art students, and work in a band that wants to be mainstream.'

SIOUX: 'I don't think we had enough material. Around this time, we'd decided we weren't going to play "The Lord's Prayer" live any more, so we thought, "Let's do a version at the end of every session and then pick the best." It was almost sacrilege to record it at all. It was our "Sister Ray". Sometimes when we played it live, it was great; other times it was awful. Maybe to put it on a record at all was wrong.'

KENNY MORRIS: 'It was fucking shit. The only way to play it was the way we'd been doing it – live and improvised. It was a very hard thing to do in the studio. We had to do it about four fucking times, and it was impossible to summon the energy. That's why you hear it drop and Siouxsie shouts, "C'mon," or something like that. It was utterly fake'

SEVERIN: 'Recording "The Lord's Prayer" was Nils' idea, and we went along with it, though it was the wrong decision to do it in the studio. Nils had this hilarious idea of going the Rick Wakeman way, all pompous with choirs and stuff, to distance ourselves from the second wave of punk groups like Sham 69 and Cockney Rejects. We didn't go that far, but we didn't have enough material and we needed to fill the album. Somewhere in the back of my mind I knew that it wasn't quite the album it should have been. The first side was so strong, though, and I thought that would make up for any other deficiencies. The only thing wrong with *Join Hands* is that it needs another mix and a couple of extra songs.'

SIOUX: 'The tape op for Join Hands was a woman called Renate, who was going out with Stavrou at the time and subsequently married Elton John. She translated "Metal Postcard", which we released on single for the German market as "Mittageisen" [June 1979]. The song had actually been inspired by a picture in a catalogue I'd bought at an exhibition of John Heartfield's photomontages. It was titled *Hurrah, Die Butter Ist Alle*, which we used for the sleeve on this single edition. The way he'd throw the propaganda back made such an impact on me. It really hit home how horrific it was that anyone would think there was any kind of alignment between the band and Nazism. Of course, the music press refused to accept any explanations. Not much different from the tabloids, really. They liked their angles.'

September 1979
Join Hands.

Sioux: 'If there is a song at the heart of *Join Hands*, it's "Poppy Day", which was created as a soundtrack for the Remembrance Day two-minute silence. There was something hugely appealing about creating music for a silence. We used a lot of First World War imagery and that imbued the whole album. It was a very un-rock 'n' roll subject for a record, but one that was incredibly powerful.

'John and Kenny hated the artwork. As far as Severin and I were concerned, the image we used of soldiers on the sleeve was perfect as an alternative to the original idea, which we all liked. There was conflict in Iran and bombings in London and it all seemed to fit. It wasn't any pro-military message; we just wanted to capture the spirit of what things were like at the time. Severin had written "Regal Zone", which summed all that up and, along with "Poppy Day", made the cover much more relevant. John [Maybury] did some nice line drawings of the band, which we used inside the album.'

Severin: 'They were illustrations taken from a strange looking Holy Communion card, an image of an odd-looking boy and girl that had been photocopied several times so it had become distorted. It looked great and it was going to be the cover until Nils started to worry about copyright. As soon as he mentioned that to Polydor, there was no way they'd use it. With the album already recorded, there was hardly any time to get the sleeve redone, so Nils ended up putting it together himself. I didn't like it much, but it did look a bit like the Velvet's second album, so it felt like we were part of the same lineage. On top of that, we'd been told that the sleeve was going to be embossed, which it wasn't in the end, so it was all a bit of a compromise.'

Sioux: 'Musically, *Join Hands* was an uncompromising album and it still sounds modern today. We were lonely and isolated and that comes across in the music. It's an extreme record, but a very brave one and that's why I still have a soft spot for it.

'The single from the album had been "Playground Twist" [June 1979], which was about as far removed from "Hong Kong Garden" as we could get. It's about the cruelty of children and that whole aspect of being thrown out into the playground in the winter in howling gales and left to fend for yourself. It's not the sort of thing you're supposed to write pop songs about. There was this TV show, *Juke Box Jury*, where celebrities would say what they thought of new releases. John Lydon and Joan Collins were reviewing it and, while Lydon bottled out and didn't really say anything about it, Joan Collins seemed very concerned about the lyrics. She asked, "Why is the woman in the song down on her knees?" It obviously troubled her.

'We loved Hitchcock's psychological thrillers, and it was the spirit and emotion of his films that we were turning into music: making songs out of obsession and psychosis. We were making soundtracks for the films in our heads. I think that's why the actual structures of our songs were so odd – to me the act of writing a "proper" song always seemed really alien. We were more concerned with trying to put across a mood and that's what I think people found so refreshing – the fact that we were so blissfully non-muso. So many bands were putting out musical versions of blockbuster movies with a beginning, a middle and a happy ending. All the films I liked weren't constructed like that; they were far less obvious.'

SEVERIN: 'I remember going in for a meeting a few months later and talking to Polydor's Head of A&R. He was a typical medallion man, who admitted that he didn't understand our music, and he couldn't believe we'd got a song like "Playground Twist" into the Top 30.'

SIOUX: 'When "Playground Twist" came out I was asked what I liked to listen to on the radio. I'd said that I didn't really listen to the radio, which was the truth because – apart from talk programmes such as Brian Hayes on LBC – I had better things to do with my life. This must have affronted Tony Blackburn, because the next day he said on his show, "Apparently Siouxsie doesn't listen to the radio, so we won't play her records then, will we?" Then he smashed the single with a hammer, live on air. I was astounded that he could take an innocuous comment about not listening to the radio as some sort of personal condemnation of everything he stood for. He went on about it for days, making me the butt of all his jokes. It was amazing that his ego could have been so fragile and that he'd interpreted my comment as me saying that I thought radio was shit. Although, come to think of it, that is what I was saying – music radio anyway.

'Again, the B-side of "Pulled To Bits" was a total contrast. What a great bassline! The production was deliberately dry, so that it sounds like me in a cold, windswept playground. I thought it was a good Banshee moment. I regret that we never recorded a version of it with McGeoch in the band.'

29 August 1979
The *Join Hands* tour begins with a warm-up show at Bournemouth's Stateside Centre.

SEVERIN: 'After the warm-up show, we got the ferry across to Ireland, where we discovered that none of the gear had turned up. The guy who was meant to bring everything over had fallen asleep at the border and wasn't going to be able to make it in time. Kids were queueing outside the Ulster Hall where we were supposed to play, but because those were the days when not more than 12 people were allowed to stand in any one place together or else it would be interpreted as a riot, the RUC were making them walk round and round the building for hours. We were convinced it was all going to go off, so we went downstairs to have a chat about it and found that half the fucking audience were in the hotel bar. It was almost like a Clash moment, with us explaining to the fans why we couldn't play, while sitting there drinking with them. In the end, we had to borrow the gear from the support band, The Outcasts. John was unhappy about that because, by this point, there was no way we could do our normal set without all the effects pedals he used. We had to radically change the set and attempt to do some of the songs in a kind of rudimentary way. That was a tense moment and the tour hadn't even got started properly.'

KENNY MORRIS: 'We'd be on the tour bus and all sitting separately. Steven would be in his own seat, Nils and Siouxsie would be sitting together. Me and John would be sat at the back. [Roadie] Mick Murphy was driving. [*ZigZag* editor] Kris Needs was with us too –

another "great" Nils idea. He was the one responsible for giving Siouxsie all these fluffy toys, which John and I pretended to throw out of the coach window. We were all very sad and all very silent. There was no point in talking. When conversation stops, everything stops. It was obvious that things were going wrong. We disagreed over so many things, and every time there was an issue we were outnumbered three to two.'

Severin: 'Kenny and John even started to turn up late for things. The very last photo session we did together was down at Camber Sands and you can tell from the pictures that they're not enjoying it, because they both of them look stoned and pissed off. They hadn't been party to the decision to do the shoot and had been told to come along. That probably made them feel even more excluded, but it wasn't like we'd consciously decided to annoy them. I wish they'd been more forceful and that we'd been able to have a huge row, but there was nothing like that. They just sulked quietly. They never gave us cause to think that a minor flare-up a few weeks later, albeit in public, would lead to them vanishing off the face of the fucking earth.'

7 September 1979
Capital Theatre, Aberdeen.

Sioux: 'We'd only played a couple of dates before we got to Aberdeen. Cracks were already showing in the band, although Steven and I weren't aware how wide they were.'

Severin: 'It was a Saturday morning, and we had an in-store signing scheduled at the local record shop. Yet again no one had told John we were doing it, so he was in a strop by the time he got there. This was about lunchtime and we were supposed to be going down to the sound check immediately afterwards, but the signing was a fiasco right from the off. There were loads of people there waiting to get the new album signed, but Polydor hadn't sent enough copies up to the shop, so we were having to sign copies of *The Scream* and the singles instead.

'When we walked into the shop, they were playing *Join Hands*, so of course the very first thing John did was say, "I fucking hate this record."

He walked up, lifted the needle and put on The Slits' album, which had come out the same week. Siouxsie started fuming.'

SIOUX: ' Because Polydor had forgotten to get enough records for us to sign, we used these copies that had been stamped "For Promotion Only – Not For Resale", and John and Kenny started giving them away. I pushed John and had a go at him, calling him an idiot or something. Nothing too nasty.'

KENNY MORRIS: 'I remember that moment so vividly. Seconds before it happened, Nils said to me, "The manager in the shop wants to take a photo." Nils noticed that my face was really down, and said, "I saw your face. I saw the way you looked."'

SEVERIN: 'Then the most bizarre thing happened. It was almost like it was prearranged, like a union downing tools and going out on strike. Without a word, not even to each other, John and Kenny stood up and walked out of the store. It seemed like they'd been waiting for the signal and that shove from Siouxsie was it. Our initial thought was, "Fuck 'em – another day, another strop, we'll see them at the sound check."'

KENNY MORRIS: 'We found ourselves outside. I remember crushing an empty can of Coke on the ground with my eyes welling. We walked down the street in tears, had a cup of tea, and went back to the hotel. This is it. We'd had enough. It was always Sioux, Steven and Nils. That's the story. We were always outnumbered. Nils thought we'd never leave; what the fuck else would we do? Well, he took us for granted. We were never interested in money. We were interested in taking an artistic stand against the establishment, musically and socially. It was about principles.'

SIOUX: 'We were supposed to meet up at the venue for the sound check and John and Kenny didn't turn up. It didn't seem too out of the ordinary. I thought they were probably sulking in their rooms. Then we found out they'd stuck their pillows under the blankets with their tour passes on them and had just run off. Nils went to one of the train stations to see if he could catch them, but they'd gone.'

KENNY MORRIS: 'We had about £200 between us and had to pay the taxi driver £50 to take us to the airport. John freaked. He kept looking behind and saying, "They're gonna send the police after us." I said, "John, they're not gonna do that. We're not that important." As we took off, I thought, "Thank God, we're out of here." Next thing I remember is John and I saying to this businessman sitting in front of us, "Can you please do something about your feet, put your shoes on or something, because they smell terrible." It was only a small chartered plane that went as far as either Liverpool or Manchester.

'We got to John's uncle's house in Manchester and when we went upstairs, it was like something out of *Snow White*. There were three little dormer beds and in the middle was this small child. John and I slept in the beds either side. It was so strange. He phoned [his girlfriend] Linda. I phoned my parents. I said, "I'm ever so sorry, but enough is enough. Nobody is listening. It's gone too far." We couldn't go any further and we didn't care. I was absolutely sure we were doing the right thing."'

SEVERIN: 'From the venue we went to the hotel and then back to the gig. They still weren't there and that's when it began to sink in that they really had run off. I was devastated. I thought my whole life had collapsed. There we were, due on stage in 15 minutes and half the band were missing. The Cure, who were supporting us, were doing an extended set in the vain hope that John and Kenny might turn up, but it was getting pretty obvious that they wouldn't. The crowd had an inkling that something was wrong, so Siouxsie and I went on stage and explained what had happened, that we were ready to play but that John and Kenny had scarpered. I think it was Robert [Smith of The Cure] who said, "Well why don't we all go back on and do 'The Lord's Prayer'?" He'd seen us do it before, so he knew what to do. It seemed like a good suggestion, so that's what we did.'

SIOUX: 'We told the audience they could have their money back if they wanted, but we wanted to go out on the stage and play something. If we hadn't, then John and Kenny would have won, which we obviously didn't want. If they didn't want to be in the band any more, then that was their decision, but we weren't going to let them stop us. At some point that evening, I gave away John's guitar away to one of the fans – it wasn't a premeditated gesture, but he wasn't going to need it any more.

'It actually felt really good to have played rather than gone away with our tails between our legs. I seem to remember telling the audience that if they saw John or Kenny they had my permission and my blessing to kick the shit out of them. We masked the devastation and the sadness with a "Fuck you" celebration. After the gig, me, Severin and Robert Smith, Lol Tolhurst and Mike Dempsey from The Cure sat at the hotel and drank as much alcohol as we could get inside us.'

Severin: 'Robert was more incensed than anyone because this was his first major tour, and two and a half dates into it the headline band had split up. He was furious. Half-jokingly, he offered to play guitar for us, as he knew all the songs and he was a fan. The more we thought about it, the better the idea sounded. We got on really well with him, so he was the perfect person to help out. I'm so glad he was there that night when Siouxsie and me were watching everything we'd worked for falling apart: if it had been just me and her, I'm sure it would have been harder for us to think about getting on with it.

'Oddly enough, right after that show, we knew that was the end – John and Kenny had left the band for ever. It was pretty obvious that they weren't Banshees any more. They must have know that if they'd turned up the next night we would have killed them.

'Is there another band that that's happened to? I don't think so. And this wasn't some drug-fuelled nightmare. Maybe they felt that the only way they could get their voices heard was to do what they did, and in doing so destroy the band, that if it wasn't gonna work with the two of them, then it shouldn't work at all.'

Sioux: 'Looking back at it now, I don't think it really was a spur-of-the-moment thing. I think they'd vaguely planned to do it. But then, if they hadn't left, I would never have met Budgie, which would have been unthinkable, or have worked with John McGeoch, who was a breath of fresh air to the group.

'Steven and I knew we were going to carry on. There was no way that we were going to let John and Kenny ruin what we'd worked for. There was never any question of us doing anything other than carry on with the band, even if we hadn't thought about the practicalities of how we were going to do it. I've always loved the words "defiance" and "determination", and they proved very pertinent at this point in my life.'

SEVERIN: 'John and Kenny did exactly what they were accusing us of – acting as one, and then running away together. They should have fought for what they believed in.'

KENNY MORRIS: 'The reason why John and I never said anything after we left the Banshees was because we were speechless. It devastated us. We couldn't talk to the press, so we put a notice out through a solicitor which went into the *NME*. Then we let the group throw shit and say what they wanted. Siouxsie and I get on well now. But at the time she said, "If you see them, you can kill them in my name." Can you imagine? John and I were on the run. We were in hiding. If any punks had seen us or found us, we could have been murdered. It was really serious. We expected the police to pull us up at any moment. But, yes, I did expect that reaction from them. Absolutely.'

SIOUX: 'Nils and Severin were actually more pissed off by the letter than I was. I think they took it much more as a personal affront and let their anger seethe. To me it just seemed like more antics from Connie and Jenny. It was pathetic. With me, I just explode and smash something, then it's over. A couple of months later, Blondie had a party at the Nôtre Dame Hall in London and I saw Kenny there ...'

SEVERIN: 'I was sitting with this girl, a friend of Kenny's, who was defending John and Kenny for leaving. Then she suddenly pointed Kenny out, sitting four or five tables away. He was with three or four other people so I walked up to him and whacked him. Nils had seen me approaching the table, and he was there in an instant, as was Siouxsie. Kenny half-fell off his chair and went to stand up and, as soon as he did, Nils hit him. He fell down again and, as he was lying on the floor, Siouxsie started kicking him. People from all sides were pulling us apart so it was over very quickly. Nils explained the situation to security and Kenny was asked to leave, not us, which made it even more satisfying.'

KENNY MORRIS: 'I hadn't been there five minutes. Next thing I know, without any warning at all, I get a slap in the face from Severin. I turn around and there are about eight or ten people, half of them bouncers, and I'm thinking, "I've got no fucking chance." But I was used to being on the road and being attacked, so I lay down, wrapped my overcoat around me and kicked out with my feet and never got hurt at all. After the bouncer showed me outside, Nils came upstairs. He was about to say something cheeky, so I gave him the biggest kick in the stomach. Billy Idol and Steve Strange both said the incident was fucking outrageous and they whisked me off to a party for The Who in Chelsea.'

SIOUX: 'I bumped into John McKay eight years later, in 1987, with his Gonzo-lookalike girlfriend Linda. Budgie and I had gone on holiday to a hotel in the Lake District, and on the first night we went down to the dining room and there were only two other people there. As we sat at our table, I realised it was John and Linda. It was the first time I'd seen John since that day in Aberdeen. I was beyond hating him, and at one point I convinced myself that I was going to ignore them. Then Linda piped up, saying something like, "Of all the people in all the world ..." That broke whatever ice was still there.

'Budgie and I joined them and we started knocking back the drinks without mentioning the past. Then Linda started shrieking about publishing royalties or something, which made John and I bond in a weird kind of way. Both our eyes met and went up to the heavens, because we both knew it was the wrong time and the wrong place. We were all really nervous, so we ended up drinking an awful lot. I later found out that they were getting married the next day in Gretna Green, so I think I must have ruined their wedding ceremony with all the alcohol we'd drunk. John walked out on our gig, so I fucked up his next gig, his wedding. That's justice.'

KENNY MORRIS: 'Polydor said they didn't want to lose us, and gave John and I £500 each, but we couldn't possibly live under the same roof [as Sioux and Steven]. We spent the money, though we didn't do anything until years later when John's record [credited to Zor Gabor] came out the same week as mine ["La Main Morte"]. We'd both had offers. John had an immediate one from Peter Gabriel, and when Frankie Goes To Hollywood's Paul Rutherford chased me down the street, I had to beat him off with a newspaper. I'd become a recluse. I continue to paint and exhibit, but I'm still a recluse, in a way.

'Can I hear our sound in the later Banshees? There were no other Banshees. But time passes. We had our time. We all loved each other. We really did. It was like a gang. When things like that are so personal, it can go very quiet. You can't speak. But John and I did speak to Nils. We told him. It became like an illness at the end. That's the perfect word.'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'On 1 September 1979, I moved down to London. The band had asked me to set up the fan club. I'd quit my job and I had nowhere to live, so I moved into this squat with Les Mills. Even so, it was my dream come true! I didn't go out on the *Join Hands* tour, but even that didn't bother me. I was now working as part of the organisation.

'I was in the office trying to set things up, and Nils says, "That's it then. We're not gonna need a fan club because the band have split." I said, "I give up my job, come down here with barely two pence to rub together, and you're telling me there's not gonna be a Banshees?" He said, "Oh, there will be at some point." I said, "So they'll need a fan club then!" That was it. Things just carried on.'

5 'I Turned To Robert Smith And Mouthed, "What The Fuck Comes Next?"'

– *Budgie*

Peter Clarke, alias Budgie, born 21 August 1957, St Helens, Lancashire.

BUDGIE: 'My dad was a joiner by trade, but for some years was a publican, so I grew up in a big pub, The Park Hotel, in one of the roughest parts of St Helens. Growing up in a pub is strange because physically you're in a much bigger space than people who live in normal houses. On top of that, it's always full of people.

'When I was eight or so, I used to lie in bed and go to sleep to the sound of the big kids playing rhythm and blues on the bandstand round the corner. They always seemed to be playing [The Beatles'] "I Call Your Name". My sister liked PJ Proby and that wasn't really me, but my brother had a good collection of R&B records, stuff like The Pretty Things, Them, The Kinks and The Troggs. I could "sing" Shadows instrumentals, and I memorised The Beatles albums pretty much by heart. That must have driven my family mad. I remember one of my brother's friends giving me the end of a nylon-tip drumstick and saying, "That was Ringo's." I believed him and kept it safe in a matchbox.

'When I was 12, my mum died and I retreated inside myself. I was sent to an auntie in Southport to recuperate. She taught me how to play "Chopsticks" on the piano – that was the first time I learned anything on a musical instrument. I suppose I had a sort of breakdown. I don't remember much about it. It was ages before I went back to school. That time is just a blank but, from then on I lost any sense of what I was going to do – I didn't care what happened to me. I don't think I came to terms with it all until years later, when I quit drinking and the band stopped... I sometimes think my Mum was my guardian angel.

'While I remember being very shy, I really enjoyed school. I was good at English and art, technical drawing and woodwork, and crap at maths. In English lessons, I used to ask if I could write poetry rather than prose because it seemed easier and you didn't have to write as much. We didn't have music at secondary school, though. When I was in the juniors I was in the choir and used to set up the music stands. Maybe I figured that choosing drums, I could put my skills to good use. I wanted to be an architect, but would have settled for a draughtsman. Perhaps an architect was aiming too high.

'The only career opportunities in St Helens revolved around the local Pilkington glass factory. Or the Ravenhead glass factory. Or one of the other glass factories. If you grew up in St Helens, you really had to be into glass if you wanted to get on. The St Helens motto was "Ex Terra Lucem", which means "From The Ground Came Light". Even that was about glass. The town's entire wealth had come from a collective ability to harness the whole process and be able to bend glass. It was all fascinating but it wasn't something I wanted to do for the rest of my life.

'When I was 13 or 14 I heard the bloke next door playing a bass guitar. That excited me, so I had a go at playing guitar but wasn't very good at it. Then I picked up a snare drum at a secondhand shop. I got on much better with that and formed a band with my mates David Jones and Alex Peachey. It was all pretty much one-note rock 'n' roll, but David had had guitar lessons and was quite good. We decided to make an album. It didn't matter that we could hardly play, or that we were just sitting at home, making a racket. I don't think we even had a name for our band, but we did have a title: *Leather Dog, Furry Boots*. We made a sleeve and a pocket for the cassette to go in. That was it – our first record. We weren't concerned that it was on a C30 cassette and sounded rubbish. It was our debut.

'It was probably influenced by Faust or another of those obscure Krautrock bands we were into. I don't really know why bands like Faust and Amon Düül II were so popular in the northwest back then, other than that they were the weirdest records you could get hold of. There was definitely competition with your peers to find music that was more odd than anything anyone else had heard.

'While still at school, I met this singer who fancied himself as a cross between Elvis Presley and Cliff Richard. He called himself Chuck Richardson, had a big quiff, a tan and dyed eyebrows. He looked is if he came from another planet. His big ambition was to be on *Opportunity Knocks*, so he roped in two guys with knock-off Fender guitars. They came round, knocked on the door and invited me to be their drummer. Soon after, we were auditioning at working men's clubs in Warrington, Widnes and Runcorn. Chuck had a theory about how to pass the audition. He reckoned you started with a rock 'n' roll number and a few pop songs, went into ballads like Ray Charles' "I Can't Stop Loving You" for the middle section, then rounded it off with "Teddy Bear", "Hound Dog" and "Don't Be Cruel", or whichever Elvis songs you could play. There wasn't much room for Faust in there, but because we were all so young and he was so weird, we started getting bookings.

'Playing that circuit opened our eyes to a completely different environment. It was quite glamorous wearing a crushed velvet jacket and bow tie for the first half of the set, and it was working out well, until the rest of the band decided that Chuck was too old-fashioned and sacked him. We changed our name to Taurus, then Shadowfax, and switched to playing the YMCA instead of working men's clubs.

'I'd always loved T. Rex and Roxy Music, but when I began to discover prog rock and heavy stuff, names like ELP and Led Zep began to appear on my canvas schoolbag. Groups like that couldn't possibly have come from St Helens, and that was just about the most important thing I looked for in a band. I wasn't into soul or Tamla Motown because that was my sister's music. I remember getting really annoyed when she said she liked one of Black Sabbath's songs. My sister is six years older than me, and my brother ten years older, so it was important that I had music that was mine not theirs.

'I felt very much a loner and I liked the element of danger that attached itself to loud heavy music. It seemed to come from a drink and drugs culture that also appealed to me. I had no idea what they were singing about, but the heavier it got, the better; the more thrilling it got, the better; the more numbing it got, the better. I'm sure I was trying to block out having to actually think about anything in my life. I used to go on my own to this place, the Geraldo Club, where they played heavy rock. I'd sink a few bottles of Newcastle Brown until the world went away. I'd just get lost in sound.

'I got a place on an art foundation course at the local college in St Helens, but before I started I went to Newquay for the summer. "Tubular Bells" was playing on the jukebox and I had my first cigarette while knocking back bottle after bottle of Tuborg lager. It felt like I was entering a new phase in my life and that there was no looking back. I'd found my direction.

'In 1976, I started at Liverpool Polytechnic. Most of the tutors were elitist and into '60s abstract art, and they tried to impose their tastes on me. They didn't encourage me to do the things I wanted to do. At St Helens, I'd been existing in a little closed world where I could do anything – painting, photography, sculpture – whatever I wanted, and that was liberating, but I couldn't do it in Liverpool. Within two weeks of starting the course, I'd cut my hair off and had my ear pierced in Lewis's department store.

'A few months later, The Revolution Club opened in Matthew Street, opposite the Cavern, where The Beatles played. It later became Eric's. There was a little gang of us who went along to see early gigs by The Sex Pistols, The Clash and The Ramones. It was so different from anything we'd heard before. Most important of all, it was really ferocious. The Clash show was a seminal one for a lot of people in Liverpool, and for me too. I'd never heard anyone play drums like that before. Topper Headon's bass drum was so deep and his snare drum so cutting. It sounds really technical, but it was genuinely shocking to hear drums like that. I got the same feeling when I saw The Ramones. The sound just pinned me to the back wall.

'One night, two old mates from St Helens, named Pete and Dave, said they needed a drummer and asked me to join them. They were called The Spitfire Boys, a name bestowed on them by Jayne (*née* Wayne) County, and they were my first proper band. The singer was completely crap, though. He wore safety pins and stuff.

'All this had rekindled my interest in music, and at the same time I realised that art college was never going to be of any practical use to me. We were all so inspired by the new music that many avenues seemed possible. That was the opposite of how a lot of us felt about college. I left my course in the second year, and so did all my flatmates, as well as a load of other people. My art tutor said to me, "What do you think you should do?" I said, "Well, I should carry on with my course and try and make a go of it, but I really like playing drums." "Go off and play drums, then," he said. That was probably the best bit of advice I ever got. I took a year off from my course thinking I'd go back. I never did.

'The first thing The Spitfire Boys did was get Paul Rutherford on stage with us. He was later famous for being in Frankie Goes To Hollywood, but at that time he was this young kid we'd seen dancing in the audience. He was one of the first people in Liverpool to wear bondage trousers. Paul was friends with a girl called Jayne Casey, who was the strangest woman I'd seen in my life. She used to be the taste cop on the door of Eric's deciding who could come in and who couldn't, an outrageously dressed, larger-than-life figure. She could be so wicked with her wit, knowing full well that she had the support of the bouncers on the door with their baseball bats if any trouble started. I liked her immediately.

'I was living in a bedsit in Gambier Terrace, by the Anglican cathedral, at the time. Paul Rutherford and Holly Johnson often came to visit, and they were there the day someone brought a budgie round and started tormenting it. I went to this budgie's defence, so the pair of them starting going, "Here, budgie, budgie." It was very stupid but the name stuck. Even my dad started using the name. Actually, I used to breed budgerigars back in St Helens. Perhaps they knew that. That was how I got money together to get my first hi-fi and drum kit, but I'd stopped all that when I began art college.

'While at Gambier Terrace, I saw the Banshees at Eric's. Julian Cope had played me "Voices", the B-side of "Hong Kong Garden". He was always too cool to do anything so obvious as to play an A-side. I don't know what image I'd had of them in my head. I did know there wasn't going to be any high-hat on the drum kit. No metalwork. No crashing cymbals or Keith Moonisms. I was so impressed that I went back to my room in a house in Aigburth that night and made a little sculpture of Siouxsie out of modelling wax and wire. It was funny because that was one of the few times that my aspirations towards high art and music came together. I'd made it as a piece of art, not as a wax effigy for me to cast spells on to make her mine!

'The whole Liverpool thing seemed to be entirely driven by childish, petty feuds over the most trivial things, like who was standing next to who at a gig the night before. Bands were constantly forming, then splitting up. After gigging around a bit and releasing a single, The Spitfire Boys folded and I joined Big In Japan, which was put together by [Zoo Records and KLF founder] Bill Drummond. He was one of the craziest, fiercest, most passionate and, at the same time, gentlest, men I have ever met. He'd rage, then cry, only minutes later – emotions that none of the rest of us could even come close to. We'd all sit around watching him while secretly nursing our own deep scars. That's what I've found over all the years I've been in the music business, that musicians almost always have a dark place in their lives, something they're not prepared to disclose. There are a lot of damaged people around.

'Big In Japan went through loads of line-up changes but did manage to play loads of gigs and put an EP out. We pretty much became Eric's house band and a certain element of professionalism entered proceedings. By that point, I'd begun to realise that being in a band was probably my vocation in life. It was far from an easy option, though. I was sitting there with the band in the Kardomah Coffee House and we'd be counting out our coins wondering whether we could afford a drink or something to eat. Meanwhile the people I'd grown up with back home were buying cars and getting married, working in factories for a solid wage. I had no desire to jack it all in and go back to St Helens to work in one of those factories. I really liked the fact that I was in Big In Japan. I was somebody. We used to be able to get into Eric's for free. We were noticed. We were worth something. It sounds really trivial, but at the time that was very important to me.

'By the time we played our last gig, in Matthew Street, just a few months after we'd got together, we were celebrities. Or at least celebrities in our little local world. Of course, not many people outside Liverpool had even heard of us. It was obvious that something really big was happening in the city but, for some reason, all I wanted to do was get out of Liverpool. One day I piled my rucksack, a cheese plant and my racing bike into the back of a transit van bound for London. The bike got nicked the moment I got there, but I hung onto the plant for a bit. London seemed like a real city. It made Liverpool feel like a little town.

'I played on [ex-Deaf School guitarist/producer] Clive Langer's EP and that was my first real stab at working in a proper studio. Just after that I heard through Clive's manager that Palmolive, the drummer with The Slits, had left. I went off to meet Ari Up, who I'd hung out with for a few nights when I was in The Spitfire Boys. We met at her mum Nora's house off the King's Road in Chelsea, and Ari played her record collection to me, dancing around with just her knickers and T-shirt on. She was a very precocious young German girl, even weirder than Jayne Casey. She played me all these reggae records ,which I thought were fantastic, and we just clicked. Next thing I knew, I was rehearsing with The Slits, which was brilliant.

'They were trying to knock a song called "Typical Girls" into shape, so I worked with them and a couple of producers on it. Everything The Slits did live seemed to come from a chaotic spontaneity. I think these were unusually disciplined rehearsals for them and the first time they'd let themselves be guided from outside in any way. I felt privileged to be given the chance to work with them. I did feel part of the girls' gang, but being the "boy in the band", I was obviously detached from them to some extent. What that role gave me was my first real opportunity to anchor something, to use my drumming to hold all the chaos together. I was never particularly impressed by musicianship at that time; rather it was the spirit that music could create that interested me.

SIOUX: 'After John and Kenny walked out, we went through the horrors of having to audition for new band members. John Peel put out a request on his show and friends asked around. I think we even put an advert in *Melody Maker*. It was Paul Cook from the Pistols who knew of Budgie via The Slits connection.'

BUDGIE: 'I got a phone call from Banshees' manager, Nils, who said they needed a drummer. I'd read all the stuff in the music papers about John and Kenny leaving and I knew that they still had a tour to fulfil.

The stuff I'd been doing with The Slits was over, so I didn't have anything to do. Before the audition I met Siouxsie and Steve in a bar. I was there with my roll-ups and pint and they had Rothman's and vodka and orange juice. I thought they were very posh.'

SEVERIN: 'He was sitting there in jeans and a denim jacket smoking roll-ups and drinking pints, which didn't really seem the right behaviour for a potential Banshee. But the more we got to know him, the better we got on.'

BUDGIE: 'I had convinced myself that, whatever I showed them I could do, it would be something way over left-field because they weren't going to be looking for something obvious. I tried to forget everything I'd learned and go in as untutored as I could. It was all about having a blank canvas in front of me, musically, and seeing where I could go with it. I didn't know any of the songs, so I just banged around for half an hour and they seemed to think it was OK. I used Kenny's old drum kit, which meant it had the Banshees sound to it.'

SIOUX: 'We thought he was good straight away and he played with us as we kept on auditioning for a guitarist. That got so boring, watching an endless stream of long-haired musos wailing away at guitar solos so feverishly that I had to unplug them to get them to stop. I was amazed at how many completely crap guitarists there were and how they genuinely thought they were perfect for the band. Half of them wanted to be in The Clash, the other half wanted to be in Genesis. Which meant none of them could be in the Banshees.'

SEVERIN: 'If anyone had come along and played [Velvet Underground's] "Waiting For The Man" on just two chords, and made some kind of discordant sound, they'd have probably got the job immediately. Instead, they all turned up to noodle for ages. It was horrible. We wanted was someone who knew the value of being mesmerising, not a rock virtuoso. And they had to look right. That was probably most important because we had a very precise idea of how the band should look. Marco [Pirroni], for all his rock posturing, might just about have been OK musicwise, but he just didn't look right.'

MARCO PIRRONI: 'I was in the middle of a rehearsal with my band Rema-Rema when Nils called and said, "Do you want to try out for the

Banshees?" I didn't know if I wanted to be in the Banshees. I knew John and Kenny had been adding intellectualism, which was just teenage student toss in my eyes. They read lots of books and thought they were clever. But maybe Sioux and Steven were open to doing something a bit more glamorous and poppy, more "Captain Scarlet" than "Overground". We rehearsed at this place in Camden opposite the Music Machine. They'd given me a copy of *Join Hands* and I'd worked it out in a couple of hours. It was the same situation as preparing for the 100 Club, except now it was theatres and there was a script to learn. Budgie turned up on the second day. I got home and Sioux called me. I told her, "Don't worry if you don't want me to do it, because I don't really wanna do it anyway."'

Sioux: 'We were hanging out with Robert Smith a lot and he said to us, "If you don't find anyone, I'll play guitar with you for a bit." We held him to it after realising that everyone else was rubbish.'

Robert Smith: 'The Banshees and Wire were the two bands I really admired. They meant something.'

Severin: 'He came in and played about three songs perfectly, so it seemed like all our problems were solved. He reckoned he'd have no problems playing two sets a night, so the tour was back on.'

Budgie: 'Even I could see that Robert fitted in much better than anyone else who'd come along. He didn't know the songs, but had written all these pages of notes in his childlike scrawl. He had hundreds of sheets of paper on stage with him just spread out everywhere.

'I had to assume that they wanted me to be drummer; no one actually came up and told me I'd got the job. It was an unspoken assumption. At first, I felt like the northern lad with the London geezers, but I suppose that was inevitable because they'd been there before me and came from a different world to me. Gradually, I began to feel more comfortable.'

Billy Chainsaw: 'Budgie was quite different to Sioux and Steven. He had a dog from Battersea Dogs Home, and an ever-present roll-up. The Banshees were more glam, though it didn't take Budgie long to get accustomed to that.'

Severin: 'Siouxsie did a makeover on him pretty quick and, without us really noticing it, he slipped into being the drummer. He seemed so natural.'

18 September 1979
Budgie debuts with the Banshees at the De Montfort Hall, Leicester.

BUDGIE: 'Robert wore his mac for his set with The Cure, then took his coat off to play with the Banshees. I don't know if he thought that was going to fool anyone. We caught each other's eye halfway through one of the songs when neither of us had any idea what was supposed to come next. He was staggering around the stage looking for one of his scribbled bits of paper and I was just mouthing, "What the fuck comes next?" The audience actually knew how the song went better than Robert or me, so they just started singing it.'

ROBERT SMITH: 'On stage that first night with the Banshees I was blown away by how powerful I felt playing that kind of music. It was so different to what we were doing with The Cure. Before that, I'd wanted us to be like The Buzzcocks or Elvis Costello, the punk Beatles. Being a Banshee for the rest of the tour really changed my attitude to what I was doing.'

SIOUX: 'The audience were really rooting for Budgie and Robert. I think they were grateful we'd come through our problems and made it back on the road. So when Budgie forgot how the drums went in "Switch", they were eager to help out. Most bands would have cancelled the tour and rescheduled the whole thing months later, but we tried to carry on as best we could. I think people appreciated that.'

BUDGIE: 'I wasn't thinking about being a permanent member of the band, only about doing the tour. With The Slits, I'd been involved in something magical and moved on, and I assumed it was going to be something similar with the Banshees. I never envisaged having a permanent role in the band.'

SIOUX: 'Everything had happened so quickly that I don't think we'd even thought about how things were going to pan out. The most important thing was to finish the tour and stick two fingers up at John and Kenny. The band they thought they were going to destroy was back on the road and stronger than ever.'

SEVERIN: 'Best of all, we felt more comfortable than ever playing together. And it was a laugh off stage as well, which was such a relief after the tension and humourlessness that had poisoned the previous months we'd spent with John and Kenny. It was really great to be having fun again.'

Sioux: 'Robert was fond of his booze, as were we, and bringing him on board just accelerated the rate of our consumption. I'd become fonder than ever of vodka and that, combined with all the stress, eventually caught up with me. Alcohol was a great short cut to the immediate deep friendships that we felt we had to make with Budgie and Robert and, to its credit, we did open up with each other much more than we'd ever done with John and Kenny. Severin and I realised how blinkered we'd been. We were being forced to widen our horizons.

'During the tour I got hepatitis. I'm sure all the gobbing from the audiences contributed to that. Spitting had become part of the punk myth, but if I saw anyone doing it I'd kick the shit out of them. You can't stop everyone, though. I lost weight and couldn't keep any food down. I was drinking heavily and eventually I started collapsing. By then I was really run-down and had lost an awful lot of weight, so I went for some tests and they kept me in. When the tour ended, I took a month off, wrote a lot of new material – songs like "Tenant", "Drop Dead" and "Happy House" – and taught myself some basic guitar chords. Despite the illness, I was feeling very inspired, probably because it was the first time in ages that the pressure was off.'

Severin: 'We had this idea that we'd go for a floating line-up with Siouxsie and me as the only permanent members, but it was obvious that we weren't going to get a better drummer than Budgie. I found myself sitting down with a journalist explaining this flexible line-up plan, then five minutes later Siouxsie walks through the doors and says, "Budgie's joining."'

Sioux: 'There had always been an understanding that Robert would go straight back to The Cure as soon as the tour was over. They were on the verge of breaking through themselves, so obviously he wanted to concentrate on that. So with Robert there was no option, we had to find someone else.'

Severin: 'I'd seen John McGeoch on TV playing with Magazine and was really impressed. They were doing "The Light Pours Out Of Me" and, while I wasn't a massive fan of the band's stuff, I thought his guitar playing was wonderful, very inventive. We got in touch and the timing was perfect because he was already moonlighting from Magazine with Steve Strange for the Visage album. The fact that he was doing that and was also interested in us made us realise how much of a maverick figure he was. He walked in and said that, while he wasn't intending to leave Magazine, he'd be happy to work with us for a while.'

JOHN MCGEOCH: 'I'd finished the third Magazine album, and was tarting around a bit, doing the Generation X album and a couple of other things. Like everybody, I thought "Hong Kong Garden" was a stunning song, and I'd seen the Banshees several times. I was surprised to get the call, but I said, "OK." Steve Strange told me to wear black, so I did, and we met up in a pub in Notting Hill. They were very friendly – though Budgie was a bit shy in those days – and invited me along to their rehearsal studio in Camden. Within two days, we'd routined "Happy House".'

SIOUX: 'It suddenly became so easy. The creative, fun part of being a band was back, and I got a lot more self-confidence. The band began to seem unbreakable and I felt proud of the way that we'd not only coped with adversity, but also used the adversity to create something even stronger. McGeoch brought a new freshness to the songs, because he was into sound in an almost abstract way. He liked the way Severin and I had really simple ideas that he could play around with. And I loved the fact that I could say, "I want this to sound like a horse falling off a cliff," and he would know exactly what I meant.'

7 March 1980
'Happy House'.

SEVERIN: 'It was important for us to start recording again as soon as possible. If we'd taken a break we would have had to think about half the band deserting us. Staying busy and working even harder meant finding a way of getting through that.'

BUDGIE: 'Siouxsie and Steven gave me the room to contribute to songs and I liked that. Sometimes I tried too hard, though, and on the first version of "Happy House" I was all over the drums throwing ideas in. I realised I had to calm down and not be quite so indiscriminately eager.'

John McGeoch: 'They really liked that guitar top line. That was the clincher, I think. I was going through a picky phase, as opposed to a strummy one, and "Happy House" is a picky thing. They said, "Do more of that!" I didn't think it sounded very much like a single at the time, but it was lighter and had more musicality in it. Even Polydor raved about it.'

Severin: 'We'd been listening to Pink Floyd's *Relics* a lot and had thought about getting their original producer, Hurricane Smith, to produce our single. We also wanted Tony Visconti, who'd worked on lots of Bowie stuff. Nils took Siouxsie and I along to a party at Visconti's Good Earth studios so we could meet him. We were in the control room and they were playing the American version of Bowie's "John, I'm Only Dancing", which you couldn't buy anywhere. I'd heard legends about this dancey, soul version of the song and I thought, "I've got to have this." I picked up the quarter-inch tape, stuck it under my coat and left. The next morning I woke up hung-over and about 50 messages on the answering machine informing me that not only had I taken the tape, I'd also taken half the machine as well. At that point, I realised that Tony Visconti wasn't going to work with us, a bunch of fucking thieves. I think he'd already declined by that point anyway, so I didn't feel too bad.'

Billy Chainsaw: 'The B-side, "Drop Dead", was aimed at John and Kenny. I remember Sioux and Steven adapting some stupid nursery rhyme and carving it in the run-out groove: "Bye Bye Blackheads!" It was like, "Fuck you!" They proved they didn't fucking need 'em.'

Kenny Morris: 'I thought "Drop Dead" was brilliant, but I did think, "Jesus Christ!" On the other hand, "Drop dead, you stupid little creep ..." Oh, I should have been playing on that! It's just a pity it's about me.'

Sioux: 'When we first went to America, I met this K-ROQ DJ called Dusty Street, who was a great fan of the song. It was the era of the Kissogram, and I joked with her live on air about this idea of a Fuckoffagram, where people receive very thorny, dead roses with their heads cut off and a message like "Fuck off and die" all to the tune of "Drop Dead" being played. I'm surprised it didn't catch on.'

SEVERIN: 'Songwriting was always kept separate from our social life. We wouldn't hang out in pubs and scribble lyrics on the back of beer mats or anything. Siouxsie and I started going to [publisher's] Chappell Music in Bond Street to write. Earlier, we'd collaborate on songs whenever we thought of anything, but by now we were writing tunes and lyrics on our own, then meeting to work out how to turn them into songs. We were prolific. All the songs for the album were done in a week or so. Songs like "Paradise Place", "Eve White Eve Black" and "Christine" were written incredibly fast.'

SIOUX: 'I remember coming away with a rough demo tape and thinking, "God, they sound brilliant." It all came very naturally and it filled us with confidence to have been able to do it so quickly, especially because we never considered ourselves musicians at all.'

30 May 1980
'Christine'.

SIMON BARKER: 'Steve was living with me in my council flat in Bermondsey. He's one of these creative people who liked to work alone. He'd never play you anything until it was finished. But there was this piano in his room, and as I came in one day he said, "I've just written this song." He and Siouxsie were on a creative roll. They were feeding off each other and coming up with such great ideas . If Sioux did something really good, it would inspire Steve. That creative competition gave the work an edge.'

SEVERIN: 'I demoed "Christine" in that room using a drum machine and bass. The piano element was me tinkering with ideas for a melody.'

JOHN MCGEOCH: 'I was surprised at just how much input Steven and Siouxsie had – not that I thought they were stupid. They really believed in what they were doing. They knew they had a lot of songs in them, and were working out what to play by trial and error, I suppose. I don't think they'd mind me saying they got it right by getting Budgie and me in. It was a much more seamless transition than they could have hoped for. It's easy when you've got a good team like that.'

SEVERIN: 'John could see things clearly and, being a fan of the band, he knew what we were getting at. Some people might have been daunted at having to step into an established band, but not him. He was a Scotsman from Greenock, quite naturally aggressive and assertive as a character, so he fitted in immediately. We were working fast again.'

JOHN MCGEOCH: '*Kaleidoscope* was a learning curve for all of us. It was recorded in this slightly strange studio above a Co-op in Surrey. We were racking our brains for producers and I said, "What about that guy who produces The Police?"'

BUDGIE: 'Nigel Gray had been a doctor before he'd become a record producer. I've no idea how he'd made that career leap, though he did have a doctor's bedside manner and lovely soft, blond hair. Gray was the one who introduced us to cocaine. He'd just grind it up anywhere.'

SEVERIN: 'He'd become pretty wealthy on the back of The Police, and fancied himself as looking a bit like Sting, which he did from a distance. He used to wear a brown leather suit, which only Jim Morrison has ever been able to carry off, and he was very flash with money. However, engineers who turn into producers always seem very responsive to bands that want to try things out, and Nigel Gray was like that.'

SIOUX: 'Making that album was a lot of fun because we were all experimenting. On "Tenant", Severin played guitar and Budgie played bass, just because we fancied moving around a bit. Nils even brought [Sex Pistols' guitarist] Steve Jones down to guest on a few tracks.'

SEVERIN: 'I wasn't convinced about him playing on the record, but when he turned up he was unbelievable. He played on three tracks in one day and his contribution to the album gave it another layer of depth.

'We definitely had a concept to the album, which was to make each track completely different. For the first time, we did it without thinking about how we would play any of the songs live. It felt like our first opportunity to get stuck into studio work as opposed to recording live sets. Writing songs in the studio was a totally new experience for us.'

18 August 1980
Kaleidoscope.

SIOUX: 'We chose *Kaleidoscope* as a title because we were discovering that we had a lot of sides to ourselves and because we were multifaceted in our approach to making the album. When it came out in Germany, though, the spine on the sleeve of the record read "Siouxsie And The Banstrees". That was so annoying, the fact that we were doing our best to make something great and they couldn't even be bothered to check if they'd spelled our name right.'

SEVERIN: 'You had to keep a close eye on what the European wings of the record company were doing. We went mad when we saw a press release in Holland that said, "Siouxsie And The Banshees are Britain's answer to Blondie".'

SIOUX: 'While we were recording *Kaleidoscope* there hadn't been a decision as to whether this was going to be a permanent line-up. But after we realised we were going to be supporting it with a long tour, we wanted to make it official that we were a proper, permanent unit. That's when Budgie and McGeoch became full-time members of the band.'

JOHN MCGEOCH: 'They invited me to join the band and make a commitment. I was sad leaving Magazine, but the Banshees were so interesting, and there was less dependence on keyboards. It felt like a good move.'

SEVERIN: 'What really swung it was that Visage were hugely successful that year and Magazine just couldn't compete in terms of paying wages and stuff. John could see that his best option was to join us, knowing that he'd be getting a degree of creative input. He always said that Siouxsie and [Magazine's] Howard Devoto were similar figures in terms of the group dynamic, so he knew he was going to be a guitar foil to her in the Banshees. He wasn't going to be able to run anything, but he would be able to interpret the ideas we had, which I think was a role he was comfortable with. He knew it was the best thing for him to do.'

BUDGIE: 'Back then every gig was like fulfilling a dream. Best of all for me was going back to Liverpool and playing the Liverpool Empire, one of the city's biggest theatres, and walking out of the stage door to find kids lining the street. That was brilliant. We had a party down at the Holiday Inn by the docks and all these people from local bands turned up. A lot of the snootier ones had always ignored me in the past because I was just Budgie the drummer, but now that I was Budgie the drummer in Siouxsie And The Banshees, they all wanted to be my friend.

12 November 1980
The Banshees leave for a two-week tour of America.

SIOUX: 'We were really looking forward to playing there and were so frustrated that it took so long in coming. America only embraced things like the Stiff Records tour, the safe, rhythm-and-blues groups that weren't that dissimilar from their own bands. They were wacky and thought they had an edge but, to be honest, they were rubbish. The first US gig we played was in Philadelphia [14 November]. Beforehand, I remember having a meatball sandwich – a speciality of the city – but it didn't agree with me. Halfway through the gig I threw it up into Budgie's drum kit. I used to retch into his drum kit quite a lot.'

BUDGIE: 'I wouldn't let anyone else do that. Must've been love.'

SEVERIN: 'It was a bicoastal tour, so we played the eastern seaboard and then flew over to California, but that still left plenty of opportunity for weirdness. As soon as Budgie reached New York, he went missing for about a week and we were convinced he was having gerbils shoved up his arse in some dungeon somewhere. In fact it was just that he'd been completely blown away by the place and was trying to experience as much of it as he could in one go.'

SIOUX: 'America was at least five years behind Britain in terms of its musical taste. You see pictures of our early gigs over there and almost the entire audience is wearing lumberjack shirts and sporting feather haircuts. It's a grotesque sight.'

BUDGIE: 'We had a few cool young things at our East Coast gigs, but once we got to California everyone looked terrible. Even the ones who were trying to be punks were just spoiled rich kids wearing bin liners and safety pins. They'd pretend they were really into us then, when we met them they'd say, "Hey guys, you wanna come to the beach with us tomorrow? We can score some grass!" Terrible people.'

PATRICIA MORRISON (The Gun Club): 'No one was doing the Siouxsie thing in LA. There was me and this other girl and that was it! A lot of the spiky-haired punk thing didn't appeal to me, but Siouxsie had glamour, real dark glamour. I'm not surprised they didn't come to LA until quite late on. LA is a weird town and I don't think those early shows went down that well. I'd heard she was quite upset at one of them. LA can be so vicious.'

Sioux: 'We finished the tour at The Whiskey A Go Go in Los Angeles [27-30 November 1980], a notorious rock 'n' roll venue. It was a residency, two sets a night and sweltering hot. Bryan Gregory, the hunk from The Cramps, was at the last show, and there were drinks back at his to see his snakes. I remember spending a lot of the evening chasing a boy named Rick (Van Sant) round the apartment with this snake. A great trip!'

28 November 1980
'Israel'.

Severin: 'We wanted to do a Christmas single, and to get it out on time we had to write it on the road, which was quite unusual for us. We wrote it in a hotel room in Amsterdam [11–12 October 1980], and it came together very quickly at the sound checks.'

Sioux: 'The Star of David was a recurrent visual image from "Israel" through to *Juju* and, to an extent, it was an atonement for using the swastika. Maybe I had been naive in thinking people would understand what I was doing with the swastika. I must have been, because we started to get a lot of National Front skinheads turning up to gigs They used to piss me off so much. I tried everything to stop them coming, drawing attention to them and slagging them off, even stopping a gig and beating the shit out of them a few times. But they just wouldn't fuck off. I was so pissed off that I decided to use another equally strong symbol, the Star of David, which would completely alienate the idiots. When we played this gig in Derby, we tried everything to stop them, but nothing seemed to work. So we went off stage, put the "Israel" T-shirts on and did "Drop Dead" with the lights spotlighting them. It was fantastic. The whole audience felt empowered and turned on them.'

Severin: 'Nils pushed the Star of David imagery because we didn't have a proper American deal. Nils reckoned that the American record industry was predominantly Jewish, and he thought if we could make the Star a prominent symbol on our records they'd look on us more favourably.'

Sioux: 'That was never discussed with me. I hated anything to do with sucking up to the business. I'd have bloody well had a swastika tattooed on my forehead *à la* Charles Manson if I'd have known!'

SEVERIN: 'The start of '81 was a weird time in music because a lot of the old guard had fallen away or changed. The Pistols had finished and John Lydon had formed Public Image, The Clash were in America, and even post-punk acts like Joy Division had split. I remember Joy Division's *Closer* coming out the same week as *Kaleidoscope*, just as their debut had come out the same week as *Join Hands*. It was as if they were always one album behind. People used to say that bands like Public Image, Joy Division, even The Cure were ripping us off, but I preferred to think they were having the same ideas as us but just a bit later. Maybe that's being a little generous, but I did feel they were kindred spirits to some extent.'

JOHN MCGEOCH: 'Elitism? That's a good feeling to have in a band. It has to be an "us against the rest of the world" kind of thing. There always was a kind of pride – some might call it hauteur – in what they were doing because they were bloody good. That didn't stop Siouxsie taking Clare Grogan under her wing a bit. Altered Images were literally a bunch of kids who'd been out on tour with us and Steven ended up producing their first album.'

SEVERIN: 'I'd never produced before. I actually found it really easy, even though it was a "learn as you go along" kind of thing, and I liked the band members as people. Clare Grogan was very bubbly, but when she turned up to do the album she had this massive scar down her face. I thought, "Hmm, she's from Glasgow, then." She'd been at a gig and got caught up in some ricocheting pint-glass incident, so she had this really angry gash on her face. It seemed completely inappropriate for someone with such a sweet image.'

JOHN MCGEOCH: 'We began to tour a lot. We got very tight, there were plenty of sellouts, and everybody enjoyed what they were doing. By the time we went in to record *Juju*, the dynamics had already been perfected on stage.'

SIOUX: 'We wanted to play the songs live before we recorded them. It was the complete opposite of the way we'd done *Kaleidoscope*. I have great memories of recording around this time. The mixing desks were so long that everyone was physically involved in the production. That hands-on element was very important.'

JOHN MCGEOCH: 'Going into a multi-track situation not knowing what you were doing would have been a total waste of money. So a lot of the material had been routined, though we were always able to develop ideas in the studio. Accidents would happen. Nigel Gray was mates with all that Surrey crowd, so he moved us to [ex-Roxy Music guitarist] Phil Manzanera's studio for a few nights. That's how [Kevin] Godley and [Lol] Creme came to have some input on that record, because it was there that I picked up their "Gizmo", this machine that makes the guitar sound like a violin or a cello. I used it on "Into The Light". There was a lot more building and layering on *Juju.*'

June 1981
Juju.

SEVERIN: '*Juju* was the first time we'd made a "concept" album that drew on darker elements. It wasn't pre-planned, but, as we were writing, we saw a definite thread running through the songs, almost a narrative to the album as a whole. The African statue on the cover, which we found in the Horniman Museum in Forest Hill, was the starting point for a lot of the imagery. The imagery we used for *Juju* was the most confident and fully realised up to that point, which makes it one of the most enduring in people's perceptions of the band. That's when people started saying it was the first ever "gothic" album, a description I hate because most people don't even understand what that means.'

SIOUX: 'Gothic in its purest sense is actually a very powerful, twisted genre, but the way it was being used by journalists – "goff" with a double "f" – always seemed to me to be about tacky harum scarum horror and I find that anything but scary. That wasn't what we were about at all. There was something hippie about it too. *Juju* did have a horror theme to it, but it was psychological horror, nothing to do with ghosts and ghouls. We were quite confident with the image we were putting across, and were starting to play with it a bit.'

SEVERIN: 'We'd actually described *Join Hands* as "gothic" at the time of its release, but journalists hadn't picked up on it. Certainly, at that time, we were reading a lot of Edgar Allan Poe and writers like that. A song like "Premature Burial" from that album is definitely gothic in its proper sense.'

PHIL OAKEY: 'It wasn't the band's fault but I do think they invented goth as we know it. They were archetypally what it became – especially those intense vocals and Kenny's terrific tribal drumming. It established the pattern.'

SIOUX: 'I've always thought that one of our greatest strengths was our ability to craft tension in music and subject matter. *Juju* had a strong identity, which the goth bands that came in our wake tried to mimic, but they simply ended up diluting it. They were using horror as the basis for stupid rock 'n' roll pantomime. There was no sense of tension in their music. Anyway, *Juju* wasn't all about darkness.'

SEVERIN: 'If there was a band that influenced what we did on *Juju* it was The Cramps. Not musically, because they were much more rooted in straightforward rock 'n' roll, but in terms of some of their imagery and the way they came across.'

JOHN MCGEOCH: 'The Banshees would never call themselves a goth band because it's simply not true. The sound on *Juju* had more of a rock feel to it and, in some ways, harks back to *The Scream*. We were always more thriller than horror, that Hitchcockian juxtaposition of two unlikely elements. More blood dripping on a daisy than scary beast sinking its fangs into its victim. Steven once told me that his nightmare would be to be stuck inside the avian cage at London Zoo. He hates Hitchcock's *The Birds*.'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'I never understood why they hated being described as goth. You only have to look at the lyrics, particularly some of the stuff that Severin used to write. I'm not talking about bats and ghosts. I'm talking about Gothic literature as an artform. C'mon, the band's name comes from a Hammer horror movie – *Cry Of The Banshee*! That root had always been there. It just happened that a genre came along that later called itself goth. It didn't really matter, because the copycat bands were imitators. Nothing was ever going to be as good as the original.'

SIOUX: 'I've always seen these tags of convenience that journalists tend to come up with as lazy journalism and a real cop-out, an inability to deal with something that they can't or won't understand. Call it what you like – punk, funk, new wave, goth, I don't care. I don't want anything to do with it. I would never limit myself this way, or use these terms to describe our music. Now, if you're talking about people with a flock mentality and a need, that's something else. There are plenty of people like that. We're not like that. I'm not like that. *Juju* was an African word for karma or luck. There's good *juju*, and there's bad *juju*.'

SEVERIN: 'We did the video for "Spellbound" [May 1981] in Burnham Beeches near Heathrow. It was where all the Hammer horror films were made, the woods where you always see the stagecoach barrelling past, so it was interesting to be filming there. I was really pissed off, though, because it was Cup Final day. Spurs were playing Man City and I had to spend the whole day up a fucking tree! I was so glad it was a draw. It meant I could watch the replay.'

JOHN MCGEOCH: 'The great thing about the single format is that it imposes a discipline on the structure of the song. Severin always talked about this: three minutes to get from the intro to the end, via the theme, the chorus and so on. Quite a few songs immediately suggested themselves as singles.'

SIOUX: '"Arabian Knights" was inspired by the fact that I was listening to a lot of The Doors at the time. I wanted those kind of melodies running through it.'

JOHN MCGEOCH: 'We were a pop group, a pretty damn heavy pop group, and a successful one too. We were having hits. It was inevitable there'd be a lot of Siouxsie lookalikes out there.'

14 June 1981

The Banshees kick off a five-week European tour in Brussels, before beginning the British leg at the Woolwich Odeon, London, on 23 July.

SIOUX: 'Our level of success became weirder by the *Juju* tour. All these people would come along and be nice to me and I actually got quite annoyed. If you want to make me cringe, compliment me. I was supposed to be giving everyone a hard time, but I couldn't do it if they were applauding out of genuine love for the band. I felt really awkward. I didn't like being idolised. I'd been used to battling audiences in the early days. At the Hammersmith Odeon show, I remember berating the audience for being nice to us. I sang one of the hit singles with my back to the audience as a childish (but at the time satisfying) show of disapproval. I know it sounds perverse, but it took a long time to get used to being liked rather than having people trying to start fights with us.

'Did I feel any responsibility towards the fans? I certainly didn't want any responsibility. At the same time, part of me did feel protective towards them because I figured that if they were into our music they must be good. We always told our fans not to be an army of sycophants. We really didn't want to go on stage and be faced by a load of Siouxsie cartoon figures. That was missing the point. The music always came first, and besides, I thought to myself, "Why the hell would anyone want to look like me?"'

Sioux: 'Then there was Captain Scarlet, another dedicated fan who had a great way of following us around. He'd steal a car from whichever town we were playing, drive it to the next date, and dump it. Then he'd nick another car from that town and drive it to the next place, and so on. I'm sure that the police of England must be kicking themselves for not realising that the car-stealing crime wave coincided with our tour.'

Severin: 'Even though we'd picked up more of a mainstream audience I was conscious that we'd created a strong identity of our own and, as a band, I felt we were operating outside the rest of the musical scene. Different trends came and went, but we didn't care about fitting in, trying to be like other bands. By setting ourselves apart, we built a solid foundation for what we did from then on.'

6 'Budgie And I Seemed To Spend An Awful Lot Of Time Hiding In Each Other's Bathrooms'

– Siouxsie Sioux

JOHN MCGEOCH: 'I honestly didn't know that Siouxsie and Budgie had started a relationship. I still had no idea the day I left the band. I suppose the thought crossed my mind when they started working as The Creatures and had those pictures taken in the shower together. I can only assume there was a lot of creeping around in hotel corridors late at night.'

SIOUX: 'Most people are impressed by guitars, but I've always picked up on big drums. That's what was great about The Glitter Band – two drummers! There had definitely been some kind of relationship between me and Kenny, though it always remained non-sexual.'

BUDGIE: 'I don't know why it is, but playing music and connecting with someone on a musical level is something that makes me twinkle. It happened with Jayne in Big In Japan and, in a non-sexual way, it happened with Ari from The Slits. There is definitely a special link between drummers and vocalists, and that link is imperative if the music is going to be good. The singer and drummer play the roles of conductor and interpreter and everything else in the music revolves around that. Our particular link grew stronger on the *Juju* tour, when Siouxsie and I started doing the song "But Not Them" together as a duo, in the middle of the set.'

SEVERIN: 'It gave John and I a chance to go off and have a cigarette and a brandy, but I never left the side of the stage. I always used to stay and watch and it worked really well.'

SIOUX: 'McGeoch said "But Not Them" was perfect with just drums and voice and didn't need any guitar or anything on it, and Severin agreed. They both encouraged me and Budgie to try doing some stuff together. That said, they were probably sniggering, expecting us to trip up.'

BUDGIE: 'There was no room on *Juju* for the song so Siouxsie and I decided to do it on our own. I arrived at the rehearsal with a couple of bottles of sparkling cider. It was the first time I'd been alone with Siouxsie so I needed something to calm my nerves! We bashed it out, wrote three other songs too, and it sounded good.'

SIOUX: 'Everyone was shocked that it all went so well. We spent three days in the studio with Mike Hedges, by the end of which we'd recorded and mixed an EP. We certainly weren't called The Creatures when we went into the studio. We got the name and the title for the "Wild Things" EP [September 1981] from Maurice Sendak's book, *Where The Wild Things Are*. Also, we'd done a version of The Troggs' "Wild Thing" on it. I know I didn't want the name Siouxsie anywhere on it.'

SEVERIN: 'After my stay in Borough with Simon and his boyfriend, Derek, I'd moved into a flat in West Hampstead with Spizz and Dave Woods' girlfriend, Jan. Richard Jobson and I took over the garden flat, and most weekends we'd hold these massive parties. It was at one of these that I suggested "The Creatures" to Siouxsie, and she loved it.'

BUDGIE: 'Around that time, Siouxsie and I came out to each other about our mutual feelings. I'd certainly been attracted to her the first time I saw her on stage in Eric's. When I saw her from a distance after a Banshees show at the Croydon Greyhound, she caught my eye again, but I didn't think much about it when I joined the band. I simply assumed that Siouxsie and Steven were a couple who played it cool.'

SIOUX: 'Falling in love was a very slow process. We were touring *Juju*, and I was getting sick and tired of going out drinking and watching the roadies picking up girls in clubs. One night, I think it was in Essen in Germany [11 July 1981], I decided to stay in and wash my hair. I think Budgie began to pull back a bit, too. We were talking a lot more, finding things out about each other. One of the things that first bonded us was how we both felt about losing a parent at around the same age. Budgie's virtually my opposite. It's almost a negative/positive relationship. But, in spite of those character differences, we're very similar.'

BUDGIE: 'I didn't want to keep going out either, and it didn't seem right that nobody seemed to care what Siouxsie was doing left on her own. I felt strangely protective. I know she'd hate me for saying this, but I always felt that the person I was attracted to wasn't the public figure, but the little girl inside who seemed a bit lost. Then the physical attraction grew so strong that it became increasingly difficult for us to be separated from each other.'

SIOUX: 'I remember saying, "This is a secret between you and me, right?" I was very self-conscious about it and didn't want anyone else to know. Then we did that photo shoot with images that were anything but discreet.'

BUDGIE: 'We were at a hotel in Newcastle doing a gig to celebrate the Handicapped Olympics [10 August 1981]. This was a big event at the climax of it all, with awards being given out and everything. We were asked to do a special gig for an invited audience of kids, so we did all our singles. It was one of the greatest shows we ever played.'

SIOUX: 'Everyone was so enthusiastic. There were all these autistic children grabbing my legs and screaming while others spun around in their wheelchairs. I was calling them all "Nutters!" and they were whooping back. It was fantastic. One guy got a bit too excited and started to go off into paroxysms of delight when I hugged him. I think his nurse was a bit worried that I was going to seduce him or something.

'Fuelled by a lot of champagne, Budgie and I let Adrian Boot, a photographer we'd known for ages, take shots of us in a shower together in one of the hotel rooms. It was my obsession with Hitchcock's shower scene in *Psycho* again. I wanted the ambiguity of sex and murder for the shot and, of course, in black-and-white. For the label photos, I wanted the spirit of [Millais'] pre-Raphaelite painting of Ophelia underwater, and covered in flowers, and wanted it to look as if I was nude. Because it was only going to be a head-and-shoulders shot, I wasn't too bothered. There were a lot of flowers!"

BUDGIE: 'We dried off, sauntered down to the bar and said, "That went pretty well," and said no more about it. That's why it was even more of a shock for them when they saw the results.'

SIOUX: 'Unfortunately, Nils and Severin saw the contact sheet and some of the images were pretty explicit – nipples were showing, and in some shots it looked like Budgie had a microphone shoved down his tights. The shoot had taken three hours, and we'd had a hell of a lot of alcohol to get our courage up to do it, so the results were inevitably pretty wild.'

SEVERIN: 'Nils was livid. Chainsaw thought it was out of order, too. I was more ambivalent. All I cared about was that the music fitted into the Banshees' universe. And it did – brilliantly. I thought it was a smart move for us to start diversifying at that point.'

SIOUX: 'I never thought that us doing something as The Creatures would affect the band in any way, but there was a sense of panic after the photo shoot. For the first time, there was a hint of sexuality, and I think that's why Nils and Severin freaked.

BUDGIE: 'The first thing you do as a couple is to state your affections publicly. It was almost the opposite with us. We couldn't do that because we didn't want to change that chemistry, so we developed a code of secret looks. Sharing a Walkman sitting in the back of the bus listening to Talking Heads or something was the closest we could get to a private moment. We'd do anything not to be found out.

'It started to get ridiculous. One time, we were staying in The Gramercy Hotel in New York, yet again trying to avoid looking like a couple. Siouxsie was in a room on the 17th floor and I was on the second. The only way I could get up to see her without anyone spotting me was by running up the fire escape outside.'

SIOUX: 'Another time, we were heading off for a sound check, but because Budgie hadn't turned up everyone was slagging him off. I felt really bad joining in because I knew he'd been in my room only half an hour earlier. I remember looking up through the window and catching sight of him up on the fire escape in a state of disarray desperately trying to open the doors to get back into the hotel. When he eventually turned up, I shouted at him louder than anyone else for his slack timekeeping.

'I used to wear these leather bracelets with bells on them, and if I was heading off down the corridors for a clandestine assignation with Budgie I'd have to make sure that I muffled them so no one heard me.

Every time we got together, it would be a major operation. We seemed to spend an awful lot of time hiding in each other's bathrooms.'

BUDGIE: 'I recently read Norma Khouri's disturbing book, *Forbidden Love*, and although we didn't have the death threat of Islamic law we did go to extraordinary lengths to keep our relationship a secret.'

JOHN MCGEOCH: 'Siouxsie was very keen on band spirit, and she'd do anything to protect that. In fact, going on stage became a bit of a ritual: chanting in the dressing room, fist in the air stuff. It worked, too. I was very much a team player, so I liked that. I attached a lot of significance to the "family" element of the Banshees because of the shattered family I came from, I suppose. I needed it at least as much as anyone else did. Siouxsie was the centre of the whole operation, but it was done in the right way. She certainly wasn't a dictator.'

SIOUX: ' "My boys"? I did use to say that, which probably pissed them all off! I felt very proud and protective towards everyone in the band. I also wanted the audience and the critics to be clear that it was a band, not a frontperson with a backing band. We thought that was very important.'

8 October 1981

A second North American tour – lasting seven weeks – gets underway at the Commodore Ballroom in Vancouver, Canada.

SIOUX: 'North America was a completely alien world but I quite liked it because at least I had something to hate again; I could get the conflict back. Just walking down the street, heads would turn. It was like we were Martians. The one thing I really loved about America, though, was the bars. I loved the idea that you could get cocktails everywhere. I thought New York was wonderful, probably because it's not really like the rest of America. But I did hate being the only girl on a bus full of smelly men. Some roadies would only pack one pair of socks for a six-week tour. Awful.'

SIOUX: 'At the show in Pasadena [14 October 1981], John tried to stop a fight by whacking someone with his guitar.'

SEVERIN: 'It was halfway through "Christine", so he was only playing an acoustic, but he took it off and belted the bloke he thought was responsible. I think he got the wrong person, so he was whisked away in handcuffs after the show.'

John McGeoch: 'The guy was lucky it wasn't a solid electric guitar! It was a stupid thing for me to do, and the guy got the police and they put me in jail. Luckily, the promoter was the son of the local DA and I was bailed out at two in the morning. For the rest of the tour I had to make sure I didn't sign anything in case it was a summons.'

Sioux: 'I got arrested out there once, too, several years later. We were in the Orpheum Theatre in Boston, and it was laid out in such a way that, if photographers stood to take pictures, they'd block the view of the whole audience, which didn't seem right to me. After four or five numbers I told them to sit down, but one of them kept standing up and snapping away. I stopped a song and told him off, but he kept on doing it, so I got his camera and belted him with it. It bruised his eye, which is almost an executionable offence over there and the next day his paper had this full-page headline about me assaulting one of their staff. I was Public Enemy Number One there for a while.'

Severin: 'We were very pleasantly surprised when we first played the American South because when we hit Houston, Texas [19 October 1981], we realised that it had a gay district and that we were headlining at the best gay disco in town. Siouxsie made friends with the trannies, who all sat on the edge of the stage, while everyone else looked like they were in Dr Hook And The Medicine Show. There were Stetsons all over the place.'

Sioux: 'One gig in New Orleans [the Old Man River Club, 20 October 1981] was really weird. It was in this strange supper club that served chicken in a basket at tables, and there were no lights so I had to shine a torch to see anything. I didn't exactly endear myself to the crowd either cos I came out on stage and said, "All right, you swamp people?"

'On American tours, to make your journey from A to B worthwhile, you had to play all these backwater places in between, so we'd often end up playing these bizarre little rooms in the middle of nowhere. Sometimes you'd stumble across brilliant places with die-hard fans and the gigs would be amazing, but for every great one there'd be a couple of weird bookings in some godforsaken dump. We'd often end up at these scary truck stops after gigs in full, sweat-ruined make-up, and people would look at us with complete horror on their faces. The locals were invariably a bit mad themselves. There was one place where a woman who was apparently a fairly well-known psycho took her top off and ran through the car park. All the truckers locked themselves in their vehicles while someone rang the police.'

5 November 1981
Siouxsie hits Minneapolis.

SIOUX: 'It was 11 in the morning, freezing cold and everyone else was asleep. I looked around the bus and thought, "You fucking tossers, I'm going for a walk." So I put on a Stetson and a poncho and went. I had this mission in my head to hit the bars and drink brandy. The town was desolate and windy but – God Bless America! – the bars were open. I remember walking through the business banking district in a foul mood looking for somewhere to drink, and I wandered miles, ending up in a much rougher neighbourhood. I was praying for some smartarse to make a comment about it not being Halloween yet so I could pick a fight. I went into this bar determined to get fuelled up and beat the shit out of someone. I sat in the corner scowling and giving off such a threatening vibe that everyone simply stayed away from me. You'd think that a girl on her own looking weird would be a prime target to gang up on or mug, but they weren't having any of it. I really wanted someone to pull a gun on me or something.'

BUDGIE: 'When the rest of us woke up she was nowhere to be seen, so we split up and each headed across town in a different direction trying to find her. We thought she'd got lost somewhere because her sense of direction is hopeless at the best of times. We didn't imagine she'd gone off on a bender. No one could find her so we went to the venue to start soundchecking, by which time it had got dark. She'd been gone for hours. Eventually she turned up completely pissed. I remember her walking on stage and grabbing a microphone that wasn't there. That's when she realised she wasn't quite herself.'

SIOUX: 'Before the gig, McGeoch was giving me black coffee and walking me round in circles trying to sober me up. I was all over the place, just giggling. It turned out to be a great gig, though. I'd managed to sober up and had got rid of a lot of my frustration. In my head I'd probably had an imaginary fight in one of the bars like Clint Eastwood or someone. Perhaps I'd been fighting with myself ... To this day I'm astounded that nothing happened, because I was dying to get shot or run over or end up in prison. I must have had some sort of force field around me.

'On long tours there's always a point where it feels perfect, a point where you're all striving for the same thing. But there's also always a point where you never want to get back on that bus again. You get used to it to some extent, but it doesn't stop it happening.'

SEVERIN: 'I'd only been back in London a few days when Lydia Lunch turned up on the doorstep. She was here to play some gigs with The Birthday Party and The Cure, but had sacked her band at JFK airport. I said, "What are you going to do?" She said, "Well, here's my new album. I want you to learn it and put a new band together for me." The gigs were only four or five days away, so I told her, "No chance."'

SIOUX: 'I spent Christmas in LA and San Francisco with friends, and did the whole Disneyland experience, shook Minnie Mouse's hand and everything. When I first arrived, the people on the door wouldn't let me in. They said I was a distraction, that too many people were taking pictures of me instead of Mickey. I was wearing a leather mini-skirt, leather jacket, spiky wristband, big hair and thigh-length boots, but then that was what I always wore. I put on a plummy English accent, and that seemed to calm them down, but they insisted I kept my jacket on.

I didn't really like LA, but San Francisco was great. There were loads of men dressed as nuns, and glitter and tinsel everywhere. And a lot of acid, too. I had a great time.'

SEVERIN: 'After all that touring, I had neither the energy nor the inclination to learn how to play a load of new songs. Still, as Lydia was supporting The Cure, it seemed a great opportunity to go on the road and have a laugh with no responsibilities. We decided I'd play guitar and we'd just go on stage and make a racket. Banshees guitar roadie Murray

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'Lydia had this album, the soundtrack to the Arab–Israeli Six-Day War. God knows where she'd found it. Basically, we put loads of feedback over the sound of gunshots and Arabs and Jews screaming at each other; that was our set. I guess it was one of the earliest forms of sampling. It was truly dreadful, absolutely awful, but, for the first time in my life, I was able to go on stage pretty drunk, something I'd never do with the Banshees. It was a great opportunity for me to let off steam and hang out with Robert again.'

JOHN MCGEOCH: 'I'd go out with Severin quite a lot. Budgie was living with his girlfriend Ginette [Landray, who later sang on The Glove's album], and Sioux tended to keep herself to herself quite a lot, so we I used to go clubbing together. We were good buddies.'

SEVERIN: 'I went over to John's house for dinner one Easter, when I was first getting to know him, and all his mates from Scottish bands were there – [The Skids'] Richard Jobson, [Ultravox's] Midge Ure, the lot. Halfway through the meal someone lobbed a scaffold pole through the window and all the Scots, John included, got up as one, ran out of the house and started chasing the bloke who'd done it down the street. They came back with an assortment of bumps and bruises, but you just knew that the other bloke would have been a lot worse. We found out as we got to know him better that John did like a brawl from time to time, and once he'd got a few drinks inside him he'd usually find a way of getting himself into some sort of a fight. He never went looking for one, but wouldn't shirk one if it came his way. He definitely wasn't someone to cross.'

SIOUX: 'We were in the VIP bar at a place in Victoria called The Venue soon after we met him, and I was getting hassled by this fucking idiot who was trying to bum cigarettes off me. He then started insulting me, so I slapped him. He was about to pile into me, and John, who'd been to the toilet and witnessed what was happening on the way back, just screamed, "What are you doing to my Siouxsie?" and clocked the guy. He was always good to have around in those situations.'

SEVERIN: 'Jobson and I gave up our West Hampstead flat when I left for the *Juju* tour. I put everything into storage and Jobson said he'd find us a new place for when I got back. I came back and find that I was now also sharing with Mariella Frostrup, who he'd just got engaged to, and their little froufrou dog called Watty, whose shit I used to step in all the time. That was a pretty stressful flat share.'

Sioux: 'We were all living in fairly dodgy flats, usually around the Maida Vale area because Nils had a place there. I was living in a flat in Croxley Road, Queen's Park, in West London. I called it Crocodile Road. It was a furnished one-bedroom flat with an electric meter that you had to pump 50 pences into. It cost 30 quid a week or something. We were having hit singles and top-selling albums and we were still living in these shitty little flats, but we weren't complaining.'

Severin: 'It was 1984 before any of us got any real money to be able to buy places to live. That year we got 15 grand each. So this image people have of musicians becoming millionaires overnight is a myth. Well, it certainly was back then.'

John McGeoch: 'We also began to socialise a lot with [producer] Mike Hedges. He was this huge teddy bear, a smashing guy with ginger hair and a big ginger beard. He used to take me home in his Porsche 928S, without doubt the fastest thing I've ever been in.'

Severin: 'We'd first met Hedges when Robert was about to step in for the tour after John and Kenny left. He was doing a Cure B-side to "Jumping Someone Else's Train" at a place called Morgan Studios, and Siouxsie ended up doing backing vocals for it. We got him in after we realised that recording "Fireworks" with Nigel Gray wasn't working out. We'd had some problems with him while doing "Voodoo Dolly" [on *Juju*], which he thought was far too raucous. He once told me that his job was to make sure that that side of the Banshees never made it out of the studio. It was news to me, so we moved on to Hedges.'

Budgie: 'Mike Hedges was someone we immediately connected with. He was part owner of Playground Studios in Camden, just a couple of years older than us, and he wasn't jaded. His capacity for everything, drink especially, was phenomenal. We used to start recording sessions with a trip down to the local Greek restaurant, where we'd guzzle vast quantities of retsina. That was before we'd even try doing any work.'

SIOUX: 'Record producers are often hedonistic people. I put it down to working weird hours and the cabin fever of constantly being locked up in a little windowless room. We got on well with Hedges, though, and I was particularly impressed by the fact that he was the first producer I'd met who was completely in love with vocals. He was very enthusiastic about trying different effects on my voice and multi-layering it.

'Playground was an apt name for the studios because that was exactly how he treated it. He'd try anything. I remember him once putting a microphone with a Durex stretched over it in a bucket of water to see what it sounded like. His enthusiasm was contagious. He was like a big kid, and a great ringmaster for practical jokes. One time he wrapped this lippy Cure roadie in gaffer tape and put him in a flight case. Hedges was big enough to do it without any help. Working with him was the most fun we ever had in the studio.'

SEVERIN: 'Budgie was always coming up with one too many percussion ideas. While we were working on demos for the next album, he had this plan to use bongos. Hedges convinced him that they'd sound much better played in the cellar of the studio. So he sent him down there with his bongos and a tape operator, locked the trapdoor, and went out for dinner leaving him there for hours blissfully unaware that no one was listening.'

SEVERIN: 'During a break from Playground, we were working down at Abbey Road and this guy called Anthony Fawcett, who was putting together a compendium of modern music, came to visit. He'd been an assistant PR for The Beatles and hadn't been in that particular Abbey Road studio since he was there years ago with John Lennon. McGeoch was recording a part for "Obsession" and, at the very moment that this guy started talking about Lennon, the tape inexplicably slowed down for a minute and then speeded up again. We left it [as it appears on *Dreamhouse*] and everyone congratulated us afterwards for this clever special effect. In fact, it was the ghost of John Lennon, I'm sure of it.'

SIOUX: 'Mike Hedges was the one who introduced me to LSD – California Sunshine. It was seen as a hippie drug, but it didn't feel like that at all. I remember Nils once telling me, "Whatever you do, don't take LSD, it's scary!" I thought, "That sounds good," so I started to use it recreationally. One time, I decided to have a night in under the influence just to see what would happen, and I ended up writing "Cocoon" and some Creatures stuff. It's all a bit of a blur, but I remember getting out this Neapolitan ice cream and thinking I was on a beach. I was actually in the kitchen on the floor.'

SEVERIN: 'Robert had just discovered LSD as well, which he decided to call "Anna" for some reason. During the *Dreamhouse* sessions we went out together and after consuming plenty of booze ended up at a party where we decided to trip together. On our way back home we found a shovel in the front garden of a terraced house and we took turns hurling it discus-style until we succeeded in decapitating a streetlamp. We decided we had to get back to my place really fast as it was getting light and the "straight" people were coming and our feet felt "really big". We got home and Jobson found us in a pile on the living-room floor. It didn't help that he was wearing a hooded bathrobe. We thought he was some kind of alien druid.'

JOHN MCGEOCH: 'Heroin was one drug that none of the band were ever involved in. There wasn't a junkie vibe around the Banshees at all.'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'I wasn't surprised when Nils went. You knew there were problems. Also I think Dave Woods, who'd been around since the early days, was ready to move up from being agent to become manager.'

JOHN MCGEOCH: 'Nils was towards the end of his tenure as manager when I joined. He'd set the tours up, but never came out on the road much. Though it wasn't his fault that Kenny and John McKay left, I think that was when things started to change. Eventually, there was some falling out, which didn't involve me and so I didn't ask questions.'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'It had to get more professional. Nils was always more of a free spirit. He didn't sit behind a desk, he'd learned everything hands-on. But then again, whoever was manager, whoever was running the office, there was only one boss and that was Siouxsie. As big a part as Severin played, the boss was always Siouxsie.'

SIOUX: 'I'd always been explicit that smack was a big no-no. I did know that Nils had a past, and he'd swore to me that since he'd been with the Banshees, he'd never ever done it. I said to him that if I ever found out that he was using, I wouldn't want anything to do with him. "You do smack? You don't do the band."'

SEVERIN: 'It was difficult because he'd been there since the beginning, but it was something we had to do. Nils was there helping us along when we didn't know shit about anything. We knew Dave Woods. He'd been working with Nils all along, virtually. We were very vulnerable in those days. We didn't know enough about the mechanics of the industry and Dave was a soothing influence. It was a seamless transition. McGeoch and I started to take an interest in the business side of things, getting record-company statements and learning how it all worked.'

SIOUX: 'That's when we realised that Nils hadn't registered us for PRS. Nils had been wobbly for a long time, and that was another excuse for us to finally get rid of him, as well as being unhappy with the fact that we had a junkie running our lives. I don't think we even got it backdated – and we'd sold a lot of records prior to that time. He walked away with a sizeable cheque for his managerial [*sic*] fees, which we could have contested, but we didn't. We just wanted shot of him and quick'

MARCO PIRRONI: 'Nils was my best friend up until he died [September 2002]. He maintained right to the end that he didn't think the Banshees ever achieved their full potential. He reckoned it was their own bloody-mindedness that prevented them from having lots of big hits and making loads of money. There were things that they just wouldn't do.'

May 1982
'Fireworks'.

JOHN MCGEOCH: '"Fireworks" was an obvious single, and I was amazed it didn't do better. Siouxsie and Steven had the lyric, I came up with the string part on guitar and the killer bassline was all Severin's. We got Virginia Astley in to score it – the quartet routined it in five minutes and recorded it in one take. It's always good using the real thing. I think it was a reaction against the synthesiser. We even got the string section to make some tuning-up sounds at the beginning.'

SEVERIN: 'It was a bit of a Scott Walker thing, but there was also a touch of *Deep Purple In Rock* about it. We knew that using strings might get up the noses of the purists. It was one of those accidents that worked really well. And then, of course, [Echo And] The

Bunnymen started using them. They tended to do everything two months after we did.'

Sioux: 'The lyric for the B-side, "Coal Mind", had been prompted by this science-fiction paperback John lent me called *The Green Brain*. I can't even remember it now, but like most things it served as a trigger. We did a lot of reading in the band. I soon grew to love Camus, Sartre, JG Ballard and Samuel Beckett. When we were recording it, I said to John that I wanted the guitar to sound like a train; he was such a great musician that he didn't go for an obvious chuffa-chuffa sound. John was often so easy and inspiring to work with.'

31 May 1982

During a show in Stockholm, Sweden, Siouxsie's voice breaks up.

Sioux: 'I used to get really envious of the rest of the band and hate being the front person. There's so much more pressure when you're the focal point and that makes the pressure on tour even more intense. It was unfair that they could play with hangovers, but I had to look after my voice.'

Budgie: 'We were always embarrassed that we could all go off and enjoy ourselves when Siouxsie had to stay in so her voice would be all right the next day. Sometimes, we'd get the manager to sit with her at the bar of the hotel, while we all sneaked out behind her back to go to a club. On stage we were a very loud band and Siouxsie used to give it everything when she sang, which at times took its toll on her vocal cords.'

Sioux: 'I wouldn't listen to doctors' advice either, partly because I was convinced that they were all quacks, and partly because they didn't understand about being in a band. They used to tell me to rest my voice, which was impossible when we were touring. Then they'd say, "Don't give 100 per cent, give 60 or 70 per cent." I couldn't understand that at all. What's the point of going on stage and just singing at 60 per cent and keeping the rest for yourself for five years' time? With me it's always been all or nothing. If you're a trained singer then maybe there's something to that technique, but I wasn't doing opera. When I sing it's not about keeping control, it's about losing control.'

September 1982

A Kiss in The Dreamhouse.

Severin: 'We'd been listening to The Beatles' *White Album* while touring Scandinavia and had taken a lot of that sound on board. We had a sense of not being defined by things that were going on in contemporary music, and that made it possible for us to make a record like *Dreamhouse*. We could do what we liked, invent what we wanted. It was very liberating.

'The title came to me after seeing a programme about Hollywood prostitutes in the '40s who had cosmetic surgery to look like stars so they could get more clients. In effect, the *Dreamhouse* was a brothel. The same story became the theme of the film *LA Confidential*. It's a sexy album, and not as dark as *Juju*. John took me to one side in the studio before we recorded it and said, "There was a bit too much creepy stuff on *Juju*; let's not continue in that vein." My first reaction was, "What are you on about?", but when I thought about it I realised he was probably right.

'*Dreamhouse* was probably the most experimental thing we'd done in terms of the way we worked in the studio. Once we'd got three or four songs down, we'd fiddle around with effects to see how things came out. Hedges was very encouraging. If we came up with something really off-the-wall, he'd not only be into it, he'd want to top it. He did things like dropping plate glass from the ceiling and recording it, and looping tape all the way round the studio walls.'

John McGeoch: 'The album was more floral, less in-your-face. The nearest we got to writing a song in the studio was "Cocoon". I actually got a good review for my "jazz" piano playing, which it certainly wasn't. I was just flapping about. That was almost as funny as the time we got a bad review for a gig that we hadn't actually played.'

Anne Stephenson (violin): 'Mike Hedges asked us to come in and play strings on a couple of songs. We did "Slowdive" first. Siouxsie said, "I like Es, play lots of Es." So we started going, "Ee, ee, ee ..." My arm hurt after doing that E thing for so long, but we didn't mind. I was thrilled to be working with the band who'd made *The Scream*, which I thought was such an innovative record.'

BUDGIE: 'Yep, it's Anne who cries "Oh my God!" on "Slowdive".'

GINI BALL (violin): 'We'd heard that Siouxsie was supposed to be a bit funny with women, but that was rubbish. She was lovely. And gorgeous. We didn't find it difficult to do what they wanted – and they did know what they wanted.'

SIOUX: 'I don't like anyone superfluous around when we're working, male or female.'

ANNE STEPHENSON: 'We'd been classically trained, but we didn't find them unmusical at all. They'd pipe up and say, "More of that," though Gini and I were given free rein to develop ideas. Everything we did in those days tended to be improvised. We also worked on "Obsession". When I asked Siouxsie what the song was about, she said it was based on this story of an obsessed person who broke into a loved one's room and would leave a load of pubic hairs there.'

SEVERIN: 'When we came to make the video for "Slowdive", we had this idea for Siouxsie to be in the foreground and the rest of us to move in syncopation behind her, so we went to a dance studio to work on choreography. McGeoch couldn't cope with it at all. After about ten minutes he clutched his chest, staggered to the back and lit up a fag saying, "I cannae do this."'

JOHN MCGEOCH: 'Siouxsie and I began to have one or two musical differences. One in particular was over a French hymn she wanted to record ["Il Est Né Le Divin Enfant"], possibly because she had some French connection in the family. I said, "I really can't see this working, so if you don't mind I'm not gonna take part." I didn't. That sowed the seeds a little.'

SEVERIN: 'It was only in the last two or three months of his time in the band that John degenerated. We'd just sacked Nils as manager and were making *Dreamhouse*, which was creatively very exciting, but also, without us realising it, very draining. And John just went a little further over the edge than the rest of us. When it happened, it came very fast.'

BUDGIE: 'I remember McGeoch taking me aside early on and saying, "You gotta watch your drinking." I thought, "That's rich coming from you!" He was being sincere and concerned, but I never took it seriously. I don't suppose either of us considered we had a problem. I wish I had been mature enough to have helped him when we got to Spain.'

29 & 30 October 1982
Two nights at the Rock Ola, Madrid.

Severin: 'I went into John's hotel room and noticed that he had a box of wine by his bed. It was one of those things with the little tap sticking out of it, so he could have a drink first thing in the morning when he woke up. I thought, "Something's wrong here."'

Sioux: 'He even turned up drunk on stage. During the first show, we were playing "Happy House", and for some reason he was playing "Spellbound". He didn't even realise. He just carried on playing something completely different to the rest of us. Luckily it was only a fairly small club in Madrid, so it wasn't too much of a disaster, but it was a bit odd.'

John McGeoch: 'I really ruined this gig in Madrid, and that was it basically. My nerves were bad, too. Somebody, who shall remain nameless – but not a band member – gave me Valium, and that made me ruin the gig. It was horrible.'

Sioux: 'We knew that Dave Woods' favourite nightcap was a Valium and a Campari and soda, but I was outraged to discover this. We didn't know anything about it at the time. A Valium before a gig? Poor John.

'Earlier that day, though, we'd been to this park in Madrid where we jumped in a cable car. John was slugging from a bottle of wine. His lips were black and he was raving. I was getting so pissed off with him that I was ready to throw him out of it.'

John McGeoch: 'I was definitely out of control. I was having a hard time coping with the demands of it all. It was intense. Severin once said that the stresses and strains always affected me more than anyone else, and that was true at the time. It was a bit of a burnout, that's the easiest way to sum it up.'

Severin: 'It was obvious that he was falling apart, so when we got back to England we decided something had to be done. I dropped him off at his house, and when his wife came to the door all she said was, "Well, what am I supposed to do with him?" Her answer was to send him to a nuthouse in Roehampton. A couple of days later I went down there with Dave and was told upon our arrival that John was down the pub! We walked in and John came straight over and kissed me. This was so out of character. He'd also shaved his head and got a tattoo. He was merrily imbibing with all the other day-release loonies. I turned to Dave and said, "This is not good." I put in a call to Robert that night.

'In hindsight, what was happening to him was very sad, and we were very brutal in sacking him. There was a tour coming up, as usual, so we had to sort it out immediately. We didn't want to cancel and let the fans down, so we fired him. We should have let him have some time off to get himself together again, but there just didn't seem to be any time.'

JOHN MCGEOCH: 'I can only assume it was something to do with my mental health at the time. I wasn't well and I ended up in hospital. I was still in hospital when Dave Woods came and told me I was out. I didn't get a second chance. Perhaps I'd already had my second chance, I don't know. But there was no argument, and no contact with the band. By the time I'd got myself sorted out, it was a done deal.'

SIOUX: 'In hindsight, I think Dave Woods encouraged us to sack John because he didn't really like him, or perhaps he was scared of him. John was a lot more savvy business-wise, and was always pretty fierce about making sure he got the money owed to him, which Dave obviously found threatening. Dave always projected this happy-go-lucky image, like this cross between Joe 90 and Tweetie Pie. He was one of those people who always used humour to smooth over any situation, so he endeared himself to people by making himself the fool. He was like a lucky mascot – or so it seemed at the time.'

JOHN MCGEOCH: 'It was a bit of a misunderstanding, too. I think Siouxsie thought I was disenfranchised from the Banshees. Much later, she said to me, "I thought you didn't want to be a Banshee any more." I did. I just felt overburdened and I wasn't dealing with it very well. When you get older, you cope better. In your youth, feelings like that are new and scary, so you go looking to self-medicate and drink too much. Inevitably, you fuck up. It's a classic story. I just took a nosedive. But the good times had been very good. It was a sad time. I was gutted, but I got over it.'

SIOUX: 'My abiding memories of McGeoch are good ones. He was always fair and would discuss things with me. And he was easily, without a shadow of a doubt, the most creative guitarist we ever had. We probably didn't appreciate him as much as we should have done, but then again we didn't appreciate anybody, not even ourselves.'

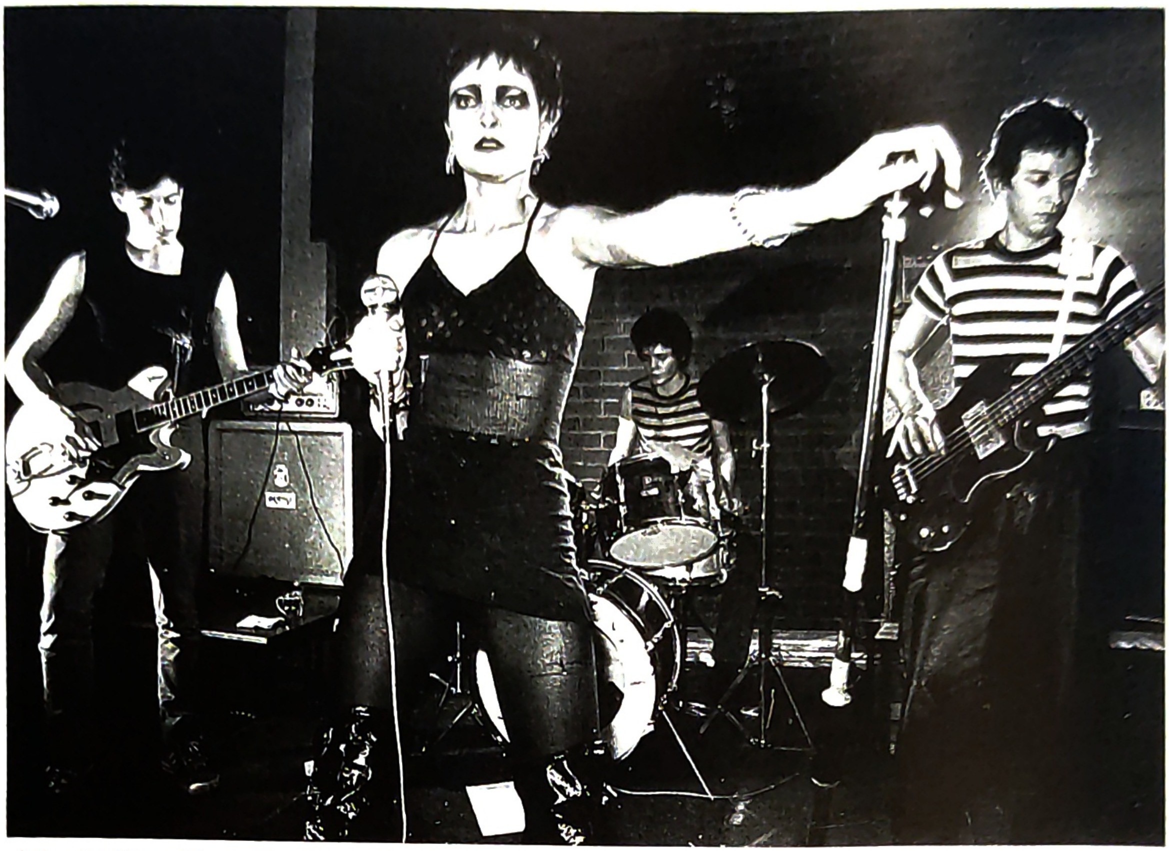
SEVERIN: 'He was a brilliant friend as well.'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'Another thing McGeoch brought to the band, apart from virtuoso guitar playing, was a love of fine food and wine. He'd had a lot of success with Visage, made some serious money, and seriously spent it! After John, the band began to develop a taste for things that would soak up a lot more of their own money.'

SIOUX: 'Until the point when John changed it really felt like "All for one and one for all", a solid unified group where a lot was understood implicitly, without needing to say anything. That changed after he'd gone.'

Photo: Severin

Siouxsie, autumn 1976: the day of the infamous 100 Club début



John McKay, Siouxsie, Kenny Morris, Severin, 1977. Siouxsie: 'The Sex Pistols' Glen Matlock said, "I don't know what it is, but it's not rock 'n' roll." It was the biggest compliment anyone could have paid us.'

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Photo: Severin

John McKay, Siouxsie, Kenny Morris in Paris, September 1977: 'We were close to starvation on our first tour abroad,' says Severin. 'Ham and eggs after each gig, then back to a cockroach-filled hotel room.'

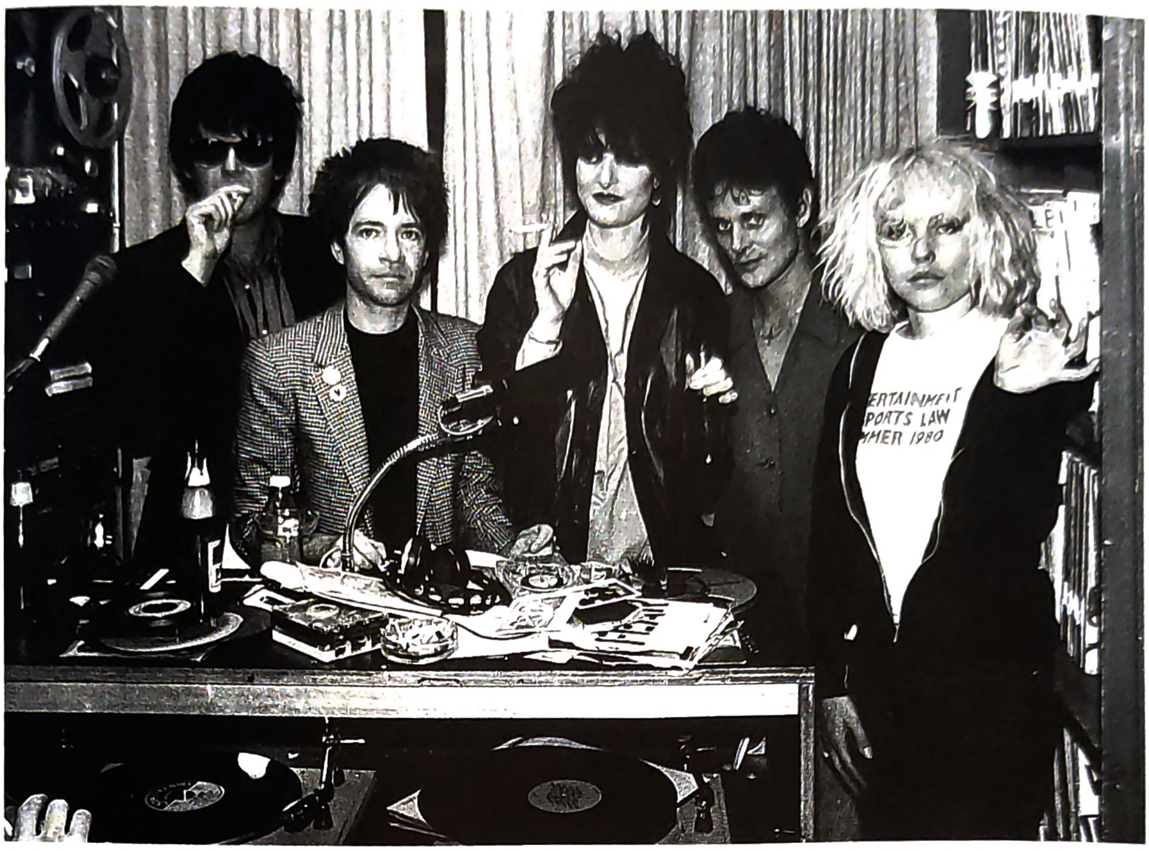
Signing at last in 1978. Polydor's head honcho, Big Jim, is flanked by (L-r) Alan Black, Severin, John McKay, Kenny Morris, Chris Parry, Siouxsie, the band's lawyer Irving David and Nils Stevenson

Photo: Stevenson

Siouxsie, McKay, Severin, Morris, summer 1979: 'Siouxsie and I started the band,' says Severin, 'so it was our band.' Weeks later, McKay and Morris had walked out

The Banshees and The Cure in Morgan Studios, September 1979, before resuming the tour after Morris and McKay's dramatic walk-out. L-r: Robert Smith, Lol Tolhurst, Mike Dempsey, Budgie, Severin and Siouxsie

Recording *Juju* at Surrey Sound Studios, spring 1981, with producer Nigel Gray (seated)



Siouxsie drops in on legendary DJ Rodney Bingenheimer (second left) at the K-ROCK station in Los Angeles, 1980. Also pictured are Blondie drummer Clem Burke, Michael Des Barres and Debbie Harry

Photo: Severin

Summer 1981, *Juju* tour bus. 'It was starting to get weirder. People would be nice to me and it made me cringe. I didn't like being idolised.'

Photo: Adrian Boot

August 1981: Siouxsie and Budgie getting wild and wet in a Newcastle hotel room for The Creatures' first photo shoot. 'For the first time, there was a hint of sexuality in my image and the others freaked.'

Symbols clashing everywhere: Siouxsie models the Star Of David, 1981.

Photo: Joe Lyons

Siouxsie, 1981: 'I reacted badly against the lookalike fans. We didn't want to play to a load of Siouxsie cartoon figures. That was missing the point.'

Photo: Joe Lewis

Budgie, Siouxsie, Severin, John McGeoch, 1981: ‘Elitism is a good thing to have in a band,’ says McGeoch. ‘It has to be an “us against the world” kind of thing.’

Photo: Nicola Thyssen

At home with the Banshees at the Priory Road flat in West Hampstead, which Severin shared with Richard Jobson and Mariella Frostrup

Sweden, May 1982. Three Banshees, one vision

Photo: Severin

A cable car in Madrid, October 1982

Photo: Budgie

Budgie's drum roadie and philosopher, Joss Grain

Photo: Budgie

The long-serving fan-cum-PR man, Billy Chainsaw. 'It was a dream come true!'

Photo: Budgie

Banshees guitar roadie Murray Mitchell, alias Sammy Turtle

Severin and Robert Smith as The Glove, 1983. 'We were a bad influence on each other. **Robert later said he was physically** incapable of cleaning his teeth after the sessions.'

Photo: Severin

Budgie, 1983: 'Playing music and connecting with someone on a musical level is something that makes me twinkle. There's definitely a special link between drummers and vocalists.'

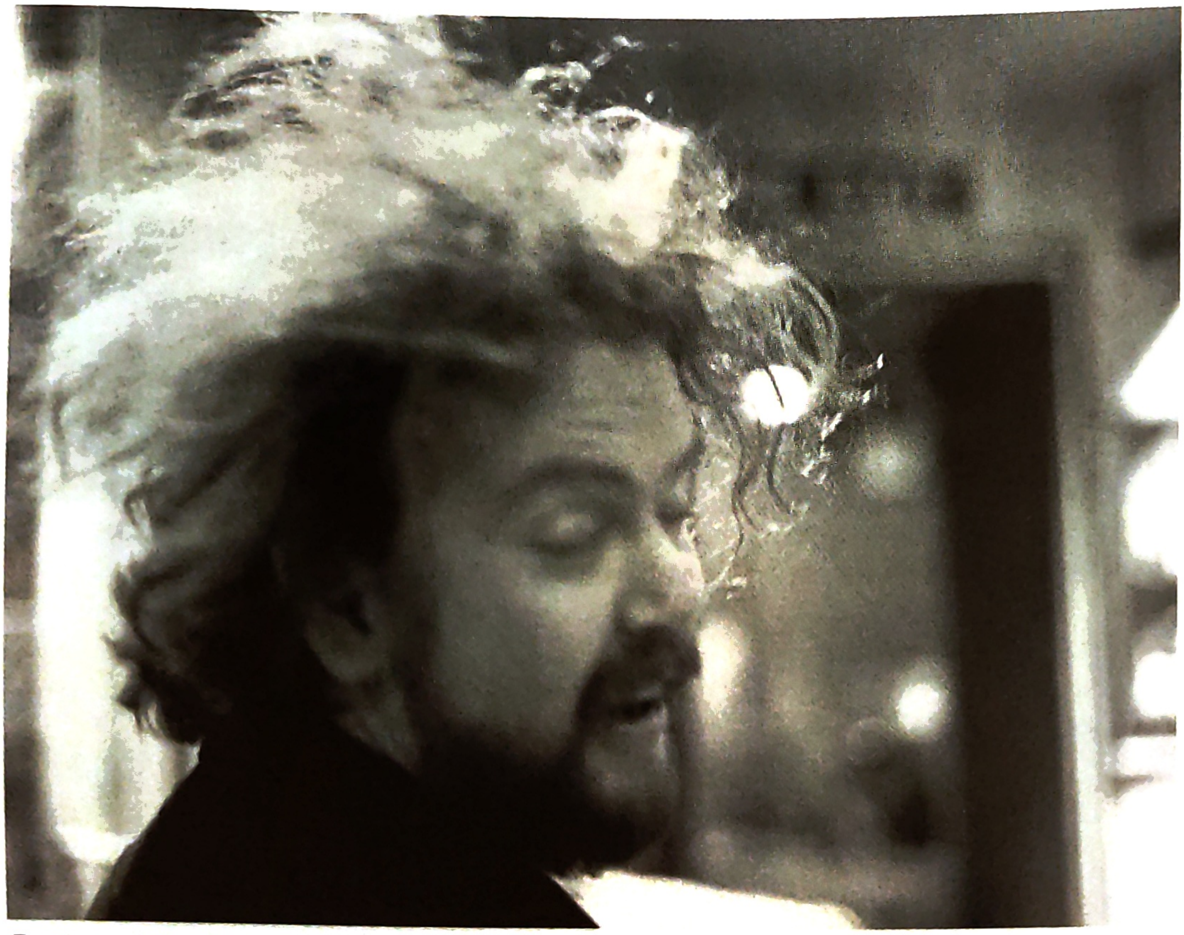
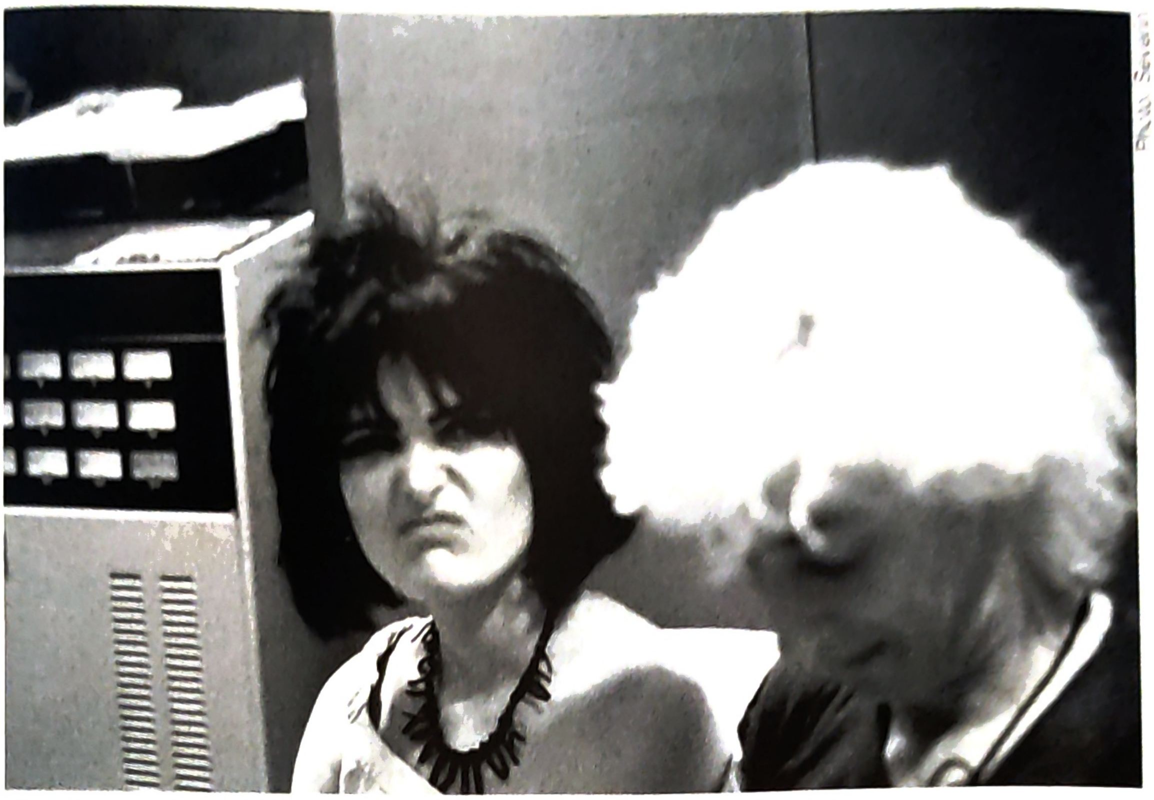


Photo: Severin

Producer Mike 'Mad Gerald' Hedges at London's Angel Studios, summer 1983: 'He was like a big kid,' says Siouxsie. 'Working with him was the most fun we ever had in the studio.'



Siouxsie and Budgie at the first day's session for *Hyaena*, summer 1983. 'We went through torture to get that album finished,' she says. 'We were all burning the candle at both ends.'

Photo: Budgie

Guitarist John Valentine Carruthers, who joined in 1984. 'The burden of the past was heavier **on him than we ever realised**,' says Severin

Photo: Budgie

Ex-Spizz man Pete Petrol, Siouxsie, John Carruthers, Severin and the band's madcap Scandinavian driver, Tuna, in oilskins at Niagara Falls, 1986

Photo: Budgie

Fake fur! Outside her flat in Elsham Road, West London, 2 January 1987

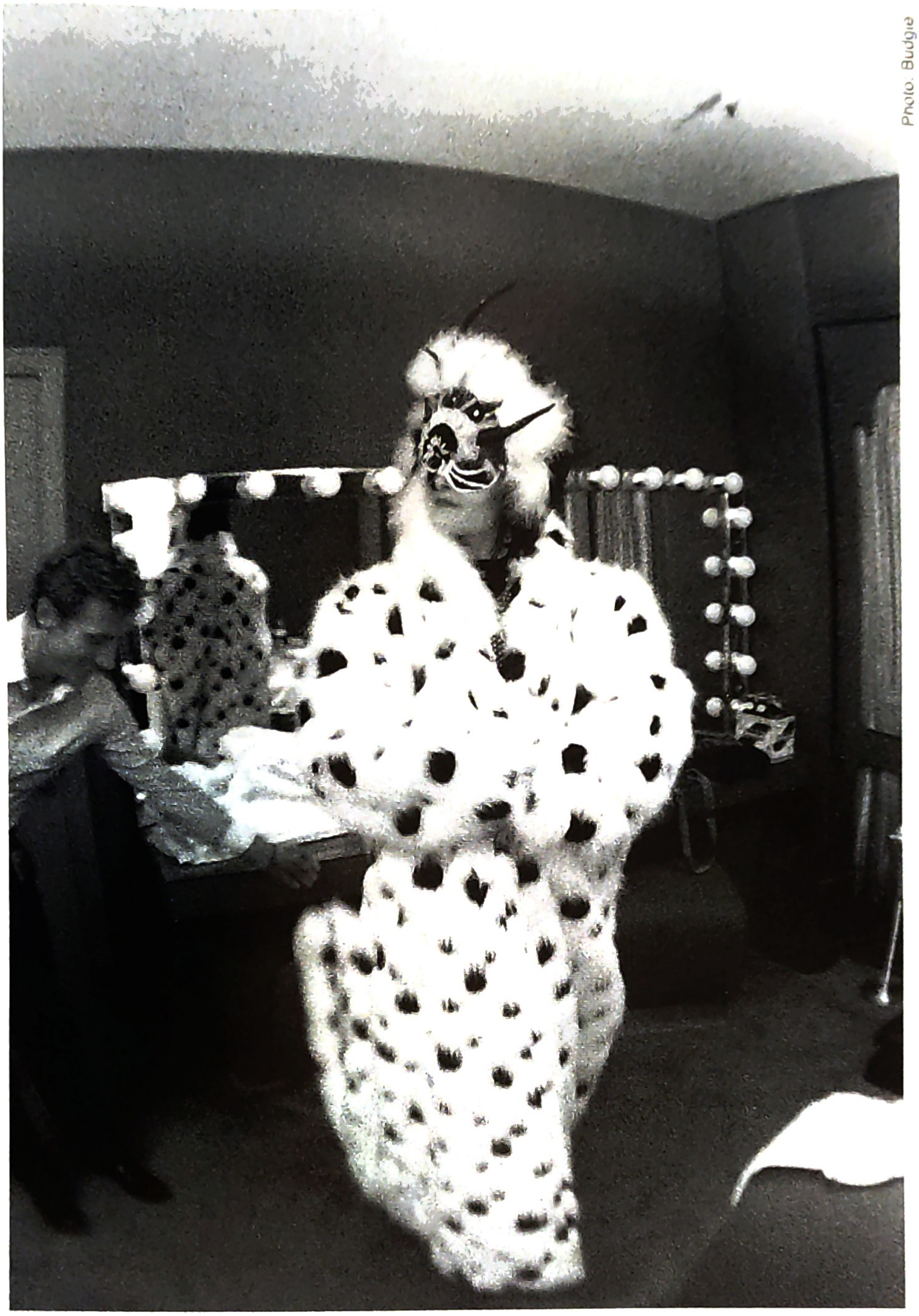


Photo: Budgie

The 102nd Dalmatian, albeit in fake fur. Siouxsie in the dressing room of New York's Radio City Music Hall, 1987

Mixing *The Rapture* in New York with John Cale, autumn 1995: 'I was hoping for something off the wall to happen, but it was flat.'

7 'We Were Completely Oblivious To How Weird It Was Getting. It Was A Strange Period In Our Lives'

– Steven Severin

13 November 1982

At short notice, Robert Smith rejoins the band for a two-week British tour, beginning with a performance at the Birmingham Odeon.

ROBERT SMITH: 'When Severin asked me to come and be in the Banshees, I thought, "Yes, that's what I want to do." It allowed me to play serious music, big chords and, crucially, I was no longer the focal point: I was just the guitarist. They brought a lot of the *Join Hands* stuff back into the set to make it easier for me . Playing with the Banshees was different to playing with The Cure. It was big music, dead loud on stage.'

SEVERIN: 'John McGeoch was a full partner in the band by this time, so, even though somewhere in his addled brain he thought he'd be rejoining us again as soon as he'd got his head together, he was glad we'd got Robert in so quickly. He would have lost a quarter of the money if we had to cancel the tour. We knew that Robert would never be a full-time, permanent Banshee, but we also realised that, no matter what happened, John McGeoch would never be in the band again. And, to be honest, I found it hard at the time to have an awful lot of sympathy for John, because he seemed to have a lot more stability in his life than the rest of us. He was married, had made a wedge of money from Visage, and he was the only one of us who actually owned a house.'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'I remember John showing up at the Birmingham Odeon show and not being the full shilling. He came up to the merchandising stand and said, "Wanna see my new tattoos, lads?" Tattoos weren't out of the ordinary, even then; it was the way he said it that seemed to be a sign of his state of mind. It's always difficult to get rid of someone, but that's the way it had to be.'

Severin: 'We probably should have just done the tour with him, but Robert insisted that he wanted to document his time with us. Back in 1979, it had just been one tour then it was gone, but this time he wanted to at least do an album with us. It seemed like a good idea at the time.'

Robert Smith: 'It was Severin who'd actually sowed the seeds of dissent in my mind. When we occasionally met up, he'd say, "Come back and join the Banshees." He wanted me in as well as McGeoch. I think he wanted to turn them into a full-on guitar band."

31 December 1982

Siouxsie and Budgie fly off in search of tropical inspiration.

Budgie: 'We sat in the office with a map and pointed a finger at a country at random. We picked Mexico, then started ringing round trying to find out what the studios were like, but no one spoke English. So we tried the next nearest place, which was Hawaii. They'd just had a big tropical storm there, so everyone was sitting there by candlelight listening to this weird request for studio time from a British band they'd never heard of. They asked what instruments we wanted and I said, "Well, drums." "And?" "Just drums, that's all, thanks. And maybe a bit of percussion if you've got it." That bewildered them, but they had some free studio time, so we went out there with Mike Hedges and had an adventure.'

Sioux: 'Actually, it was more of an excuse for us to go off together and not have to hide from anyone.'

Budgie: 'Halfway to Canada, it turned midnight in London so we had a bit of a celebration to see in the New Year. Then from Canada to Hawaii we had another midnight, and a final one in Hawaii. Three New Year's Eves in one day. It was brilliant.'

Sioux: 'When we got to our hotel we sat on our balcony by Waikiki Beach and had yet another celebration.'

Budgie: 'The following day we left civilisation and headed to the other side of the island to this studio, which was miles from anywhere.

We only had two songs written, but we were amazingly productive there. That whole album [*Feast*, May 1983] was written, recorded and mixed in ten days. We got a hit single ["Miss The Girl", April 1983] out of it too. We also got the photographs done. I still don't know how we did it all – we even managed to go gliding and hire dune buggies.'

SIOUX: 'We also found time to get into a massive fight in Pearl Harbor.'

BUDGIE: 'We'd finished the album, it was our last night in Hawaii, and we were celebrating with Rick and Donna, who owned the studio. We hit a bar in Pearl Harbor for a serious session of tequila shots.'

SIOUX: 'As we left, roaring drunk, we bumped into this group of American sailors in their white outfits. They took the piss out of Budgie, calling him a poof, and we all started shouting at each other. One little wiry guy did that kung fu "Yee-hai" thing that stupid boys do and kicked Donna in the head. Budgie piled into the biggest guy ,who palmed him off and knocked him out cold. He's still got the scar on his elbow from it. I was wearing stilettos so I took them off, straddled Budgie and waved them at the sailors shouting, "Come on, then."'

BUDGIE: 'I came round to find one of them uprooting a small tree and throwing it at us. They ran off and we piled back to our rental car. It was a Lincoln Continental with a beige interior, but the interior wasn't beige for long. Within seconds it was covered in blood that seemed to be gushing from all over me. We got back to the hotel, where they bandaged me up, and the next morning we flew back to the UK bruised but with a finished album.'

SIOUX: 'As the photo shoot had been done in a banyan forest, we also had golf-ball-sized mosquito bites all over us. We must have looked a right state when we got back home to England – like we'd been in the Vietnam War.'

10 February 1983
During a second visit to Japan and Australasia, the Banshees hit Osaka for a show at the Koseinenkin Hall.

SIOUX: 'I need fresh air for my voice, so I get paranoid about air conditioning and always turn it off and open a window. This particular hotel room had suicide locks on the windows because Japanese businessmen tend to get a bit stressed, check in and then jump out. I was getting freaked out because we had a load of shows coming up and I didn't want to ruin my voice. I decided there was only one option – so I picked up the telephone and threw it through the glass. As all this fresh air came through, I thought, "That's better!" Robert Smith was a real copycat, and when he heard what I'd done, he had to do it too.

'We'd all had a few sakes, but I went off to sleep and thought nothing more of it. Then, at about 5am, all these security people, Japanese Special Branch or something, marched into my room and asked me for my passport. They frogmarched me off to the manager's room, called an interpreter, and questioned me. We ended up having to pay for the damage, though I had got air and saved my voice, so it was all for the best.'

SEVERIN: 'At one point, every hotel we checked into seemed to put Siouxsie in a room next to some building works. It was as if there was a secret network of hoteliers ringing each other up and arranging to give her the room with the most noise outside it.'

SIOUX: 'After about a week of this, we'd ask at the front desk about any ongoing building work before checking in. They'd usually lie and put me in the noisiest room in the hotel. When I heard someone retiling a bathroom next door, I just exploded. I told the workman to shut up, unplugged his drill and refused to give it back until we'd checked out. Another time I heard strange noises and couldn't work out where they were coming from. I looked outside and, even though it was pissing it down with rain, there was some cunt in an oilskin cleaning the windows.

'There were problems that derived from having a hotel room next to Robert Smith. We were in Italy once and we couldn't wake him up. That was a pretty regular problem because he was incapable of getting up on time for anything. He'd unplug his phone and barricade himself in, quite prepared to sleep for a week if necessary. Something had to be done, so I climbed out of my window and into his. I could see his big boots on the floor with scarves tied to them, so I picked them up and started hitting him with them, screaming, "Get up, you bastard!" He was moaning, "Oh, stop being so beastly to me." I was determined that we weren't going to miss another flight just so His Lordship could have a lie-in.'

Severin: 'Robert was doing a lot of chemicals at the time, particularly acid, and I'm sure if he hadn't been he wouldn't have ended up doing The Glove with me. My acid days were long behind me, but I think he found it creatively very useful.'

Robert Smith: 'Acid made me feel very connected to Severin. We had a fantastic time making The Glove album [*Blue Sunshine*, September 1983]. We were living in a *Yellow Submarine* cartoon world. We'd walk round London, and when you're taking acid with someone you really like, it's really funny. It was a very upbeat time and it got rid of all of the bad stuff that happened while I was making [The Cure's] *Pornography*. It was liberating not having to conform to the same thought patterns. You think, "Fuck me, I can think and act in different ways." It's great, but when it takes over, you can find yourself encountering mental problems. There are people from that era, one or two that were close to The Cure, who went seriously mental. They never really recovered.'

Sioux: 'Robert started to act like Severin's little brother. He started to wear the same clothes as Steven – shades, crucifixes and beads. And he nicked loads of clothes off me, too.'

Severin: 'We went to a club called Legends in Mayfair after seeing The Birthday Party play and someone had a load of opium, which Robert decided to try. He then asked to borrow Siouxsie's lipstick and smeared it wonkily around his lips. That's how he got his trademark look.'

Jon Klein (Specimen): 'The Banshees and The Birthday Party also used to turn up to the Batcave, which Specimen started at the Gargoyle Club in Soho. It wasn't really a goth club, more of an arts space with us as the host band and a diverse crowd of people – from Test Department to [Sham 69's] Jimmy Pursey – who were into music.'

Marc Almond: 'I met Siouxsie at the Batcave. It was more of a camp glam scene really. Everyone dressed up, watched art films and performances and hung out. I'd heard from the record company that she liked Soft Cell and I was flattered. I'd been a bit of a Banshees groupie in the late '70s; there was something decadent and provocative about them. They were aloof, cool and disdainful, and that's what made them attractive. I also felt we came from the same place artistically. I had Siouxsie in mind, for example, when I recorded "Baby Doll".'

SIOUX: 'How could Marc forget? We first met at a leather stall in the King's Road while I was rummaging through a box of cock rings. I hardly ever went to the Batcave. I thought it was all a bit after the fact, darling.'

PATRICIA MORRISON: 'I first met them when The Gun Club played the Lyceum [April 1983]. Siouxsie was coming up the stairs, I was going down, she smiled and that was it. We got along well, and would go to each other's houses and stay up all night drinking and talking. There was a tight-knit group of no more than around ten people that the Banshees would hang out with.'

MARC ALMOND: 'I was always terrified of meeting famous people, especially people I admired, and I'm sure I become the gushing schoolgirl. But we struck up a friendship and hung out together for a while. The Banshees were very much a clique, so to be let into their circle was a privilege. Siouxsie and I would take acid, and end up at the Portobello Hotel in Notting Hill where I was living at the time, where we'd talk rubbish until the early hours of the morning.'

SEVERIN: 'It was '60s psychedelia that inspired The Glove, as well as that kind of Britishness epitomised by *The Avengers* and Dirk Bogarde in *Modesty Blaise*. Originally, Robert and I wanted to build an identity for a fictitious band, but the project soon took on a life of its own, especially since we were working on it at odd times. We'd start in the studio at 6pm and finish at 6am. Then he'd come back to mine and we'd sit watching video nasties like Dario Argento's *Inferno & Tenebrae* and Abel Ferrara's *Driller Killer* and *Ms. 45 – Angel Of Vengeance*. All those things permeated our dreams and we brought them to bear on the record.

'We were a bad influence on each other. It was difficult getting anything done with all the impromptu parties that took place in the studio. I know that Robert's wife regretted him doing the album because she hardly got to see him for months. Afterwards, Robert said that he was physically incapable of cleaning his teeth after The Glove sessions.'

Budgie: 'We'd recorded *Feast* in two weeks, but Steven and Robert were taking a lot longer, a situation obviously fuelled by parties and various substances. We looked in on a couple of sessions, and couldn't believe what was going on.'

Gini Ball: 'At one point, as Robert was trying explain himself, he literally fell into the piano and said, "It goes something like that." I remember him saying that he didn't want to live beyond 25, yet despite that he seemed quite happy. I suppose he was acting a bit weird around that time.'

Severin: 'The timing was good because he'd got himself a dodgy perm. It was a complete disaster and made him look like Kevin Keegan, so he needed those three months in hiding so that he could grow his hair back.'

Sioux: 'Even though Severin denies it, I think The Glove album was a response to Budgie and I doing The Creatures record.'

Severin: 'Not at all. We were all having a break from the band and Robert and I had always talked about writing together. There was enough self-confidence in the band to feel that we could do separate projects without affecting what we did with the Banshees – and it paid off. Throughout 1983 we were hardly ever out of the charts. If it wasn't the Banshees, it was The Creatures or The Glove, Robert with The Cure or our contribution on a Marc Almond record.'

Sioux: 'Hmmm ... Despite the fact that they'd spent so much time and money and effort on it, and released it at the most opportune time, The Glove album and single did nothing. It didn't really happen.I think The Glove project did affect the Banshees.'

Marc Almond: 'I was putting together this gothic opera [*Torment And Toreros*] and Severin and Robert offered to write a song for it. I think they wrote it while they were doing The Glove. Once I added the lyrics, the song became "Torment".

'After its release, Severin came up to me at the Camden Palace and said he thought the album was a mess and badly produced. It was extremely hurtful. I know he probably meant well, but it did affect my friendship with him after that.'

July 1983
The Creatures' 'Right Now'.

Sioux: 'That song was another of my childhood fixations. Like "Supernatural Thing", which the Banshees recorded earlier, it was something I'd heard through my sister and brother. Budgie and I decided to do it The Creatures' way, so instead of using keyboards like Mel Torme's original we got in this brass section.

'It was only something to keep us occupied while we were waiting for Steven and Robert to finish, and it became our biggest-selling single since "Hong Kong Garden". Everyone else was thinking, "Fucking hell, The Creatures are taking over!" I like working quickly. It's not rushing, it's getting the intent and striking while the iron's hot. Me and Severin differ greatly in that respect. He's stroking his chin, and I'm on to the next thing.

'My relationship with Severin definitely changed during the time Robert was around. I was growing apart from him and feeling a lot more confident, whereas, in the early days, he'd done a lot to inspire my confidence. Maybe Steven sensed that and didn't like it. The dynamics within the band had definitely changed.'

Budgie: 'By the time we started *Hyaena*, it was obvious there had been a definite energy drain. Nothing had been written and nothing was happening. I had a go on the bass and the guitar, and Robert was playing around on piano. That's how we worked out "Take Me Back". It was the only way things moved forward. We hadn't routined Dreamhouse either, but we'd been playing with McGeoch for so long and some of the material had already been worked up live. This was the first time we went into the studio with virtually nothing.'

Severin: '*Hyaena* took so long that, while we were recording, we put out a live album and we went off on a couple of tours. It was very much a stop-start process. We started it in the summer of '83 and it didn't come out until Easter '84. That might seem quite quick, but by our standards it was a marathon.'

Sioux: 'We had all these strange little musical toys delivered to the studio, things like an autoharp, which was a really odd instrument. This wasn't simply for recording; we'd actually try and write songs on them. "Dazzle" was written on a toy piano, and is still my favourite from the album.'

Severin: 'It was a difficult album. We jammed for days until we'd hit on something – and we'd always find ways to get distracted. There was a good curry house across the road that we'd escape to at every opportunity. To make matters worse, the acoustics in the studio were dead, and Robert wasn't making much of a creative contribution. He tended to turn up and just play along.

'By that time, there was real pressure on him to get back working with The Cure, so we started *Hyaena* earlier than we would have liked. Within the first week of us recording, The Cure's "The Walk" [June 1983] had come out and been his biggest hit, so he was constantly being dragged away to do promotion for it. We knew we had to get our album under way and snatch some recording time before Robert got whisked off again.'

September 1983
'Dear Prudence'.

Sioux: 'When we decided to do "Dear Prudence" as a single, I thought we'd be going to distort the original. But as we were recording it [Stockholm in July], I could see it was turning out to be really commercial, so much so that I suggested putting it on the B-side instead. It all seemed a bit nice and I was concerned that it might actually be very successful. It didn't seem subversive enough and was far too damn catchy. I was aware by then how marginalised a successful single makes you. I much preferred "Tattoo".'

Budgie: 'It was the only song that Robert was familiar with – he wasn't a *White Album* aficionado like the rest of us. I quite fancied doing "Glass Onion", but "Dear Prudence" was a good choice because we all felt that The Beatles' version sounded unfinished, more like a sketch. We recorded it in Sweden, and finished it at Angel Studios in Islington, where Robert was joined by his sister on the harpsichord break.'

Severin: ''I argued Budgie out of "Glass Onion". It was so obvious to me that "Dear Prudence" was the one. I don't think we'd thought about the storyboard for the video when we came to film, though. We thought we could wing it.'

SIOUX: 'We went to Venice and improvised the entire thing. We were going to film on a gondola, but that was too expensive, so we'd surreptitiously shoot and move on before anyone asked us for money. At one point, Steven got dragged off by the police.'

SEVERIN: 'That bit stayed in the video. There's this shot of the band walking across one of the bridges, then me coming back across it escorted by a couple of *carabinieri* [police].'

SIOUX: 'Because it had been so difficult to film, we decided to try again at night. Of course, once the sun goes down the drinks come out, which we thought might keep us awake as well as give us courage for the subterfuge ahead. Then Budgie decided to climb up this wall. It would have been fine except that he was wearing a pair of Japanese two-toed sloth boots made out of canvas that weren't exactly built for climbing. Next thing we know, we hear this yell …'

SEVERIN: 'He was in agony, but because we were all a bit drunk and more concerned with finishing the filming, no one took much notice. When we got back to the hotel, it was obvious that he was still in real pain, and he downed the best part of a bottle of brandy. Dave Woods got a doctor, who immediately diagnosed a fractured bone in his foot and called for a river ambulance to take him to hospital.'

SIOUX: 'When the river ambulance turned up they wheeled him away still wearing his loose silk suit, a bag of limbs dead to the world and with his crown jewels hanging out. He was still wearing all his make-up, too.'

BUDGIE: 'I woke up in hospital surrounded by surgical amputees with dark hairy skin and big grins all talking a different language. I knew I wasn't in heaven because I was confused and scared and hurt like hell. Dave Woods picked me up and I hopped back out into the Venetian sun, still dressed head to toe in crumpled gold Tibetan silk, with smudged make-up and matted bleached hair.'

SIOUX: 'He looked like a sleazy Coco The Clown.'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'It was great growing up with the band and getting to the point where "Dear Prudence" went Top 3. That was when we all agreed, "Now it's really happening." They were the original punks who'd come from nowhere, but they all wanted to be on *Top Of The Pops*. The Banshees wanted to be famous from day one.'

Robert Smith: 'That period was a high and a low point, it was my best and worst year. The Glove album, The Cure's *The Top*, *Hyaena* – I don't really remember making any of them. I'd do the Banshees album at Eel Pie in Richmond, then take a taxi out to Genetic Studios in Reading. We were staying in a pub there, so I'd meet up with the others, have a few drinks, then go to the studio. We'd start recording at 2am with a pot of magic mushroom tea. Then I'd join the Banshees back at Eel Pie having slept in the taxi. I was getting about four hours' sleep a day, and I was doing that for about six weeks.'

Sioux: 'We were going through torture to get our album finished, a situation not helped by the drawn-out making of The Glove album. And Robert's whole demeanour used to irritate the fuck out of me. I thought he was quite sweet to start with, but I was getting tired of his shuffling and mumbling. We were all burning the candle at both ends.'

Severin: 'While we were working on *Hyaena*, we were approached by some people who were making a documentary series for Channel 4. The format for these hour-long *Play At Home* shows was that you'd broadcast half an hour of live music and then do what you liked with the other half-hour. We got them to film the whole of the two Albert Hall shows so we could put it out as an accompanying video to *Nocturne*. And for the second half we decided to restage *Alice In Wonderland*.'

Sioux: 'All the other bands did earnest things. Level 42 did some kind of music workshop, Angelic Upstarts covered a Jarrow workers' march, which was really dull and worthy, and Big Country included footage of themselves packing their van. There was no way we were going to do anything like that, so we decided to make our own little movie.'

Severin: 'We had individual segments on The Glove and The Creatures, and then we scoured one of those big old *Alice In Wonderland* books for scenes we could turn into a script. The tea party stood out, obviously, and that became the centrepiece of it all. We got everyone to dress up – Hedges became the Queen Of Hearts, or The Queen Of Tarts, as we called him.'

Sioux: 'I encouraged everyone to dress as Alice. Steve and Robert [who was still with the band at the time of filming] looked hilarious but, scarily, Budgie looked quite normal.'

Severin: 'Robert is hugely hairy, even after he's just shaved. So both of us looked like something out of *The Dick Emery Show* as we sat there smoking fags in our ill-fitting dresses. We even managed to get the crew in costume, too.'

Billy Chainsaw: 'Tim Collins was the March Hare, [Marc Almond's keyboard player] Annie Hogan was the Dormouse. Another fan, Donald from Wolverhampton, played Tweedledum.'

Sioux: 'The tea party was a throwback to those nights in certain clubs when we had to drink alcohol out of teapots due to the licensing laws. We'd filled the pots with red wine and retsina, and the longer the filming went on, the more drunk we got.'

Billy Chainsaw: 'We'd been to the pub for lunch, then joined the band who were getting even more slaughtered because the teapots were filled with a Greek wine that tasted like paint stripper. Tim only uttered a few of his lines before he passed out. He was last seen with his feet sticking out from underneath a toilet cubicle.'

Sioux: 'Yeah, and in full costume with his Mad March Hare's head rammed down the toilet bowl!'

November 1983
Nocturne.

Sioux: 'That was our first live album, but we should have done one when John McGeoch was in the band. We'd built up such a good reputation as a live group, and hadn't really exploited it, so we decided to record the first time we ever played the Royal Albert Hall.'

Tim Collins (road manager): 'A ridiculous amount of time and effort went into that record. One night we stayed up at Pete Townshend's Eel Pie Studios, fortified by endless bottles of wine, finally finishing the session at eight in the morning. We'd spent all that time inserting this fan's yell for "Love In A Void", a song they'd not played in years, between every track on the album.'

Sioux: 'At one of the sessions, I caught my finger in one of those heavy studio doors. When I looked down, I could see the bone and I fainted. I had to go to hospital and have stitches in it. Pete was a very sweet man. He sent me some flowers, and I think he even got the doors changed soon afterwards.'

ROBERT SMITH: 'I kept going until the end of 1983, when it all caught up with me, and I had a kind of breakdown. I was physically exhausted. It was like the vengeance of God; I had all these boils, and my skin started to fall off. It was like my body was saying, "If you refuse to stop, I will stop you." I had everything you can imagine go wrong. My system simply couldn't cope.'

BUDGIE: 'I was unaware that Robert was doing two shifts. We never spoke about stuff. That was always the problem. Nobody ever sat down and said, "What's the matter, Robert?" We just didn't have those kind of conversations.'

March 1984
'Swimming Horses'.

SIOUX: 'The "Swimming Horses" video was a fiasco. The idea was that we'd have these coloured screens moving in and out of focus behind us. It was meant to be abstract and blurry, but it came out looking flat and really cheap. In another scene we had to get footage of a real horse swimming underwater, so they filmed it in a pool where they take horses to exercise after they've been injured. When the cameraman came back, he said they hadn't realised that each time a horse enters the water it spontaneously pisses.These were the only shots I liked.'

SEVERIN: 'It just looked like some awful kids' TV show.'

SIOUX: 'I'd always done my own make-up, but, because everyone kept telling me that I should let myself be pampered for a bit, I got a make-up artist in. For some reason, she gave me this bright orange face. The whole thing was a complete disaster and we never allowed it to be shown on TV.'

May 1984
'Dazzle'.

MARTIN MCCARRICK (strings): 'I'd been recording a Peel session with Marc Almond and it was all going horribly wrong. Marc was screaming, everyone else was screaming, and then there was this shout from down the corridor. It was Sioux and Budgie. She looked about 7ft tall and with the most piercing blue eyes – a terrifying vision in real life, like a big strutting cockatoo. Shortly afterwards, she sent a tape over to me, Anne and Gini. It was her playing a piano part which she wanted arranged for a big string section. That turned out to be the intro to "Dazzle".'

NICOLA TYSON (photographer): 'When I photographed Sioux during the video shoot for "Dazzle", I thought her image encompassed many things – doll, cat, *maîtresse*, Amazon, comic-book character, each one an aspect of herself that had been heightened. The artificiality, the war paint, the enigmatic glamour, all felt like a perfectly natural extension of herself. She was a subversive character, a new category of woman. And she has such a strong face, and knew exactly how to use it by keeping it expressionless and iconic.'

SEVERIN: 'Siouxsie and Budgie were on holiday in Bali when Robert rang me from Milan to say he couldn't do the forthcoming Banshees tour. He was touring with The Cure and his doctor had advised him that his schedule was too exhausting. It was almost a repeat of when John McGeoch left. We had major tours of Britain and America just two weeks away and we were being left in the lurch. There had always been a gentleman's agreement that Robert could leave the band when it conflicted with his role in The Cure, but it was such short notice. I was personally upset because he was my mate.'

SIOUX: 'I wasn't sad to see him go, but his timing was atrocious. We'd got back from Bali on my birthday having struggled to finish *Hyaena*, and Budgie was greeted by all these angry "Hope you fucking enjoyed yourselves!" messages from Severin on his answerphone. It was ten days before our biggest show, which was the Brixton Academy and opened a 13-date British tour.'

BUDGIE: 'Siouxsie and I had pretended to elope. I had my American Express card, went down to the travel agent's, booked the tickets and took that "honeymoon" flight surrounded by people wearing wedding dresses! Robert's departure was sad, but it was obvious that he was losing interest. I had no inkling that he had health problems, though.'

ROBERT SMITH: 'At the start of 1984, I'd began to pick myself up. I did *The Top* album and toured with The Cure. Literally the day I arrived back in England, I thought, "If I do the Banshees tour, something serious is going to happen to me." So, for the first time since I was a child, I went to my family doctor. I walked in, and it was one of those moments where someone face just falls. He didn't have to say anything. Then he told me, "Whatever it is you're doing, you have to stop." He gave me a note, which I gave to the Banshees' insurer, that basically said, "This man can't walk, let alone tour." I took another break, and during that period I thought, "What I really want to do is The Cure."'

Sioux: 'I never trusted Robert. I always thought he had another agenda, that he was using the situation. Look at the facts. In October, "Dear Prudence" made it to No.3, thanks in part to The Creatures keeping the band's profile high. The Cure's first hit, "Love Cats", came out just as "Dear Prudence" was peaking. When he left, it felt a bit like "Thanks for the ride, I'm off." All that bollocks about a sick note. That wounded sparrow act doesn't wash me with me. Despite everything, I felt sorry for Severin. I couldn't understand why he attacked Budgie and me. He was with Smith all the time. Why didn't he see it happening?'

Severin: 'A mate of mine managed to get tickets for the UEFA Cup Final between my beloved Spurs and Anderlecht. He came round with a couple of bottles of vodka and a couple of grams of coke, so we did all that and then headed off to White Hart Lane for the match. We had seats right at the back, so everything was just a tiny dot, and by the time it got to the penalty shootout at the end we were so off our faces that we didn't have a clue what was going on. We could tell from the fact that everyone around us was jumping about that we must have won, but the details were all a bit of a blur. Still, at least it stopped me thinking about the shit that Robert had left us in.'

Budgie: 'Robert was a great player, a great musician, and I knew I would miss that. But the Banshees' world didn't revolve around him, and that would have always been a problem had he stayed.'

Sioux: 'The one good thing around that time was that I'd found a flat in Elsham Road, between Shepherd's Bush and Kensington. It was the first time I'd owned anything. Budgie and I resisted moving in together.

I wanted to remain independent. I told him, "This is just a sex thing, Budgie, don't complicate things!" I lied. I was still protecting myself.'

1 June 1984
Hyaena.

Severin: 'I associate that time with things being a real struggle, The album was really difficult to make and it got more and more frustrating. We didn't have enough new ideas, and because "Dear Prudence" had been such a hit, we were under all this pressure to follow it up. When it finally came out, it was a relief to see the back of it.'

Sioux: 'There was a theme to it: the packs of dogs snapping at our heels. The artwork was put together by this strange Indian woman who was like a female shaman. She was supposed to be on a higher spiritual plane, though I thought she looked like a bag lady. When I met her for the first time, she looked at me strangely and started waving her fingers in the air. All very odd. She was probably checking out my aura.'

Severin: 'That was the first artwork we ever properly commissioned. Her brief was to come up with a picture of some hyenas. After we used it, she started asking for loads of money, so it went a bit bonkers for a while. By now, we'd got to the stage where we never expected anything to go smoothly, so it didn't come as much of a surprise.

8 June 1984
John 'Valentine' Carruthers debuts at the Brixton Academy, London.

Sioux: 'Carruthers came in totally cold for that show, but we pulled it off. It was a baptism of fire. Polydor had recommended him from Clock DVA, because they'd signed them in the past and were familiar with his work.'

Budgie: 'When we were auditioning guitarists in a rehearsal room in Camden, my head was still infused with Bali. I was still looking for coconuts and wearing sandals in the rainy North London streets. I was unfazed by the fact that Robert wasn't there. We'd been there before.'

Sioux: 'I thought Carruthers was a cocky little git when I first met him. I called him a northern tyke. But he was the best of the bunch we had to choose from.The clock was ticking. He was very blokey and it was the first time we'd had anyone like that in the band. He used to wear grey sweatpants with stains on them that I took particular exception to. Even the roadies dressed better than that. That made photo sessions tricky because we'd be in shot looking good and John would be looming out of the frame like a white rhino. Make-up didn't sit well on him, either, because his skin looked like paint peeling.'

BUDGIE: 'I actually felt very comfortable working with John. He had a lot more ideas than he gets given credit for, especially at the beginning.'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'Clock DVA had been really underground in comparison, so being in the Banshees gave him a bit of limelight. Sioux's problem was that he was a bit of a one for the women, but then, isn't that part of it? It was always a bit like, "Siouxsie and her boys." I don't think she liked too many women around, particularly on the girlfriend front. That always created a bit of tension.'

BUDGIE: 'John wasn't the first. We'd always have a laugh about McGeoch and the bottom bunk on the bus. We'd never know who'd come out of it each morning. Ooh, it were awful!'

SEVERIN: 'We thought *The Thorn* EP [October 1984] of reworked covers of earlier Banshees songs would be a good introduction for Carruthers. Hedges decided we should do it in Germany at this brand new studio his mate had built. It was right in the middle of Bavaria, and the only place to eat was the local hotel, which only seemed to serve meat. You'd go along and get your pig on a stick.The local pub was like a bowling alley that served gigantic steins of beer.'

SIOUX: 'I thought it would be great to do something based around strings, rather than bringing them in at the last minute as we usually did. Strings worked well with the Banshees. I've always loved the discordant tension that you often get with violins in orchestras. And, besides, by using strings it took the emphasis away from John.'

SEVERIN: 'Carruthers was terrified of fast cars, so Hedges would drive us back from the bierkeller to the studio in his Merc and, just for fun, turn all the lights off as he hurtled along these country roads. John would be in the back screaming like a baby. It was a bit of a baptism of fire. And he did become the butt of our pranks because he was the new boy.

We told him that Earth, Wind And Fire had got all their powers from pyramids, so we made him play all his guitar parts outside in a pyramid hat we'd made for him.'

4 July 1984

The Banshees play Warfield Theatre, the first night of a two-week American tour.

SEVERIN: 'Almost immediately we took off for our first tour of America in three years. We'd just signed to Geffen and *Hyaena* was the first record they released out there. It was weird when we turned up at their offices. Everyone seemed to have orange skin, and kept asking us why we were so pale. We said, "Well, because we're from England. Everyone's this colour in England." It looked like an office full of suntanned lizards.'

SIOUX: 'That summer, we'd started to spend a lot of time in a pub called the King's Head in the Barbican. We always ended up there because our manager, Dave Woods, had his office nearby on Aldersgate Street. It was run by a guy called Rick and there were all these rumours about him being ex-SAS. That was the impression he liked to give – he used to keep guns all over the place. He was a few years older than us, tall and skinny with wide-open eyes and a moustache. He was really hyper.'

SEVERIN: 'We were starting work on *Tinderbox*, our first album with Carruthers, but it wasn't going that quickly, so going to the King's Head provided a welcome relief.'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'The King's Head? Debauchery! Rick became such a fan that he replaced half the jukebox with Banshees records. As far as I was concerned, that place became the unofficial second Banshees HQ. When the band wanted to get fucked up, which was often, it was always done in private and with friends. If they'd come across as this fucked-up band in the papers, it would have been damaging to their image. Severin occasionally popped up in the gossip columns, with this running joke about him being this Gary Numan lookalike, but that was about it.'

SEVERIN: 'The King's Head was our shrine to all that madness. We'd nip in for a swift half after sorting out some artwork or something, and next thing we knew it would be 5am. As soon as we'd had a few drinks, Rick would be straight off to get some rifles out of his cabinet and start skulking round the pub "looking for intruders". Meanwhile there'd be us and a lot of big-name actors and actresses (from the Barbican Theatre across the road) consuming vast quantities of cocaine completely oblivious to how weird it was all getting. It was a strange period in our lives.'

Sioux: 'Rick went a bit mental, especially after we'd introduced him to acid. I had a party at my basement flat and invited him round. We were obviously being a bit loud, so the priest living above me came down with these nurses, and they were in a right huff because of the noise. I told them to piss off. They knocked again and they said they were calling the police. I was fine about it, but Rick got this panic on. He had vast amounts of drugs on him and, because the police were on their way, decided we had to take them all – coke, acid, dope, everything. By the time they arrived, I'd turned the music down, and they went away. But because of all the drugs we'd taken, things got a bit weird.

'Rick completely lost it. He had this idea that someone was trying to break in and ended up curled up in a ball in the corner insisting we should all get knives. Then he lost sense of who I was, and I thought to myself, "Right, I'm gonna hide all the knives before he fucking kills me." I was having a nice trip from the acid, seeing lots of colours and things, but Rick had gone completely. Thankfully, he passed out, which I later found out was a mechanism he'd learned as part of his SAS training. Yeah, right!'

Severin: 'He had a lot of the Hungerford-style vigilante about him. We did try and distance ourselves from him after a few months, when it was pretty obvious that everyone was going a bit off the rails. We went off to play a gig in France, and didn't invite him along, but he turned up anyway, wearing full combat gear and telling everyone he was our personal security. He had a strange look in his eyes and you really could imagine that he was about to go off and shoot up a McDonald's or something.'

Sioux: 'In the middle of all this, I saw a documentary about this period of freak weather in the '20s, when it was either incredibly hot or ridiculously cold. TS Eliot had written a poem about it. Apparently, in desperation, the locals would fire a cannon into this oppressive sky each night in the hope of bursting a rain cloud. The image of this deserted town, with someone having to stay behind to fire the cannon, stuck with me and became "Cannons" on the new album.

'Even more unlikely was the invitation I received to attend the Woman Of The Year at the Savoy Hotel [22 October] in the presence of the Duchess of Kent. It seemed so perverse for me to go and sit there alongside all these sportspeople and businesswomen. Bizarre.'

BUDGIE: 'It was difficult to maintain any sense of perspective. One night, we'd be down the King's Head, then we'd fly off for two nights in Tel Aviv, then back to a sellout at the Royal Albert Hall. We were still working, but all our energies seemed to be reserved for this other life we'd created, this hedonistic, reckless existence down the pub.'

SIOUX: 'Odd things happened on the road around this time, too. We had a driver called Tuna, who we'd met in Scandinavia. He was lovely to me, always calling me Principessa. And one time he saved our lives. We were driving along a motorway when the axle of our van broke. Sparks were flying everywhere, and if the road hadn't been empty we would definitely have hit something. I was behind Tuna and I could see the muscles in his arms and neck bulging as he wrestled with the steering wheel. It was terrifying.

'The place we ended up afterwards was like something out of JG Ballard's *Crash*. It was a huge wrecker's yard near the old Brookland's racing track, where all the vehicles that had been smashed up in accidents ended up. The guy took us on a tour and he'd point out various cars saying things like, "Three died in that one." He seemed to be getting an unnatural amount of job satisfaction. In fact, all the people who worked there seemed disappointed that no one had been injured in our crash.'

TIM COLLINS (tour manager): 'Even the shows were becoming increasingly colourful. Marc Almond was the special guest at one of the Banshees' Hammersmith Odeon shows and he'd wanted to bring a baby grand along. Logistically, it would have been very difficult, because we were using our own Plexiglas stage, so we told him it wasn't possible. After the set, Marc's manager Stevo came into the Banshees' dressing room, grabbed me by the lapels, and says, "You're a fucking cunt, you've ruined our performance." Everyone turned to see what was going on. It was never easy to tell whether Stevo was joking or not, but it became obvious that he wasn't going to let go, so I nutted him. He span across the room and ended up in the sink. Out of the silence, this tiny voice pipes up. It was Marc quietly asking, "Why did you nut my manager?"'

Sioux: 'That whole time was a period of growing up, but it was a torture test. It was as if we could only become stronger by going through some sort of pain or by mentally surviving extreme circumstances.

'Mainly because of the old Alice Cooper records and Lou Reed's *Berlin* album, we'd stupidly decided to use Bob Ezrin as a producer. He turned out to be a complete prick. It was snowing in London, and he'd turn up wearing this huge coat made out of beaver or something. He looked ridiculous, like Fozzie Bear from *The Muppet Show*. First, he tried to get rid of our guitarist, then he went on about what percentage of the writing he was going to get on every song.'

Budgie: 'Ezrin had his keyboard set up ready to write a few notes and get some publishing. He was like, "Siouxsie, I'd like to see your lyrics later, so that I can get my red pen out." He had a bunch of attitude.'

Sioux: 'There didn't seem anything artistic that he could bring along. And he took himself so seriously. We had no option other than to wind him up. One day, we were taking the piss out of him as usual and he said, "I'm not taking this shit any more," and stomped outside in a huff. He was back a few minutes later covered in a snow drift because he hadn't been able to get a cab. We all burst out laughing and that annoyed him even more. Eventually, we laughed him all the way back to New York or Canada or wherever he'd come from. We'd done some pre-production with him, but it was a total waste of time. Afterwards, we found out that his flights had all been first-class, which made the whole thing all the more galling. We'd never flown first class in our lives!'

Severin: 'Ezrin's parting comment was that we should decide whether we were an art project or a rock band.'

Budgie: 'We then spent a month, maybe two, working out the songs with Hugh Jones, who'd been suggested by Carruthers. We'd never done that before with a producer. We'd try out different keys, chord structures and tempos, and chords would be scribbled up on a blackboard. It was the most intense period of rehearsal we'd probably ever done.'

Severin: 'I played Carruthers a lot of early Walker Brothers and Burt Bacharach songs. What we wanted was that shiny, '60s guitar sound. He was the first of our guitarists to be told how we wanted him to play and what sound we wanted.

'We did try to give him scope to do what he wanted too, but because the guitarist's role in the band carried so much baggage, the burden of the past was heavier on him than we ever realised. He didn't lead a song at all, but he would put really good parts on it, picking up on what was already there.'

Budgie: 'I can remember some songs – "Parties Fall", "Land's End" and "Candyman" – developing out from John Carruthers' guitar parts. I think he'd been hanging onto them since his Clock DVA days and he hadn't been able to find a home for them before! Carruthers was amenable for a while; he really wanted to rehearse and play every day. It was only later that he became less motivated and seemed to struggle with a lack of self-confidence. When we were playing the material live in a room it was great but, unfortunately, when we got to Berlin [4 May] we didn't record them like that.'

Severin: 'We went to Hansa Studios where Bowie had made *Low*, and we had a pretty miserable time. Hugh Jones was an engineer, which turned out to be a bonus because, with everything falling to bits in the studio, he'd have to spend two hours a day repairing equipment. The place wasn't how I expected it at all. You'd go into an ordinary-looking office building, come out of the lift and be in a room that looked like a scout hut. It was the most unromantic place you could imagine, considering it had such a mystique about it. But you could see the Berlin Wall from the window.'

Budgie: 'We were there for a whole month. The recording process was frustrating, not being able to get the bass and guitar tracks recorded at the same time. Steven found it impossible to stay in the studio because it was too hot for him, and besides, there was only one pair of headphones working. He'd smashed the rest up! *Tinderbox* was a really tough album, a cataclysmic album, both for the band and for me personally. That's when I had my first major scare. I was scraped off the street by a medical crew.'

31 May 1985

The entry in Budgie's diary simply states: 'AWOKE IN HOSPITAL'.

SIOUX: 'We were staying in these apartments on Berlin's main street, the Kuff'dam, and we were all going bonkers trying to get the record made, so a lot of alcohol was being consumed. One night, I had this enormous row with Budgie in our apartment because he'd been flirting with one of the barmaids in this bar. He walked out and said that he was going straight back to the bar.

'I was so angry that I kicked a glass door. Unfortunately, I didn't have any shoes on so I was bleeding everywhere, leaving a trail of blood all over the carpet. I couldn't stem the blood flow so I went to bed, locking the door so Budgie couldn't get back in, and went to sleep. Meanwhile, he'd been hitting as many bars in Berlin as he could find ...'

BUDGIE: 'We'd all been out together but, as often happened, when we got back I'd turn round and go back out again. I didn't know when to stop. That night, I discovered that I was my own worst enemy. I had no consideration for anybody, not even myself. Drinking benders were never some kind of death wish. It was more like "Why does it have to stop now?" Whenever people offered me those things that are supposed to make you fall over, like Quaaludes, they always did the opposite to me. And drink always fired me up. But on this occasion, when I blacked out for the first time, I began to think that maybe something was wrong.'

SEVERIN: 'I came back with him and he decided to go to sleep in Berlin High Street. He just curled up in a gutter and passed out.'

BUDGIE: 'I had an out-of-body experience on that sidewalk. I'd seen myself from the air lying spread-eagle on the pavement while the street cleaners were coming round. But I don't remember anything about being roused. I woke up in this university hospital holding a receipt for the treatment I'd received. I had no idea how I ended up there.'

SIOUX: 'It was Joss, our main roadie and Budgie's drum tech, who'd found Budgie and had taken him to hospital. The doctor seemed to think that he had more alcohol than blood in his body. They put him on a drip, eventually let him out, and he came back and found me sprawled on the bed with blood everywhere.'

BUDGIE: 'Joss was in a panic, too. Earlier on, he'd set his room on fire after putting a tea-towel on his bedside light and falling asleep. We opened the door to the apartment and saw this trail of blood leading from a smashed cabinet that led to the bed where Siouxsie's foot was hanging out with a nasty gash in it. You see something like that and you think, "What the hell has been going on?" I'd been asleep in a gutter, on a drip in a hospital and now I was at the scene of a bloodbath. I thought she'd slashed her wrists, so I woke her up and made her show them to me. I'd ended up hurting her and causing her to hurt herself. In my fragile, feeling stupid state, we got her to hospital where she had her foot stitched up. But the emotional scars from that night cut far deeper than the physical.

'The following day, I made a decision to stop drinking. I believe it's called "Drinker's Remorse". A couple of days later, we were back in London, where I enrolled at a health club and began to turn things around. I probably became really self-righteous and horrible too, but it was my only way of coping. I never knew how to do things by half. There was no more than the odd "one-nighter" for quite a while after.'

SIOUX: 'That was when I began having flashbacks to when I had been assaulted as a child. I'd begun to question whether it really happened. After we'd got back from Germany, I asked my mother why no one had seemed to get angry at this man. I would have cut his balls off, stuffed them down his throat and sewn his lips up, for starters! She wouldn't really talk. It had been in the newspapers, but that had been thrown away. I needed proof that it had happened.

'I'd returned to London with stitches in my foot and had them out a few days later. I felt wounded again. Things began to blur. I started remembering being in hospital as a teenager. I had always been analytical about bodies. Stories about people who have a leg cut off and then develop a "phantom" leg have always fascinated me. I was getting "phantom" pains from deep within my old scar.'

SEVERIN: 'We sacked Hugh Jones soon after we got back to England because he was taking too long to do the overdubs. He also tried to sneak a string quartet on one song without telling us, which you just don't do.'

SIOUX: 'We also discovered that, in our absence, he'd sneaked unfinished mixes to Polydor despite our explicit instructions not to.'

Severin: 'Typically, we'd gone past our deadline again, so we had to interrupt the mixing to rehearse for a weird series of summer gigs in the south of France and Italy. We went to Naples [18 July] for the first time, which was absolutely bonkers. As we drove into the city from the airport, there'd suddenly be ten kids all over the car trying to clean it. We also went to a little seaside town called Taranto near Bari at the heel of Italy. I think there were only two families in the entire place because everyone looked the same.'

Budgie: 'Open-air gigs in Italy around this time were usually funded by one of the political parties, so there was usually trouble. At one of them, staged in the grounds of an old lunatic asylum, a riot developed between people who'd not been allowed inside and the *carabinieri*. Tear gas was dispersed into the crowd, who then picked up the canisters and returned fire. But the wind carried the gas into the audience and towards the stage. We began to notice that the crowd had suddenly become very emotional, and before we knew it our throats had closed up, our eyes were streaming and the gig literally ended in tears.'

Severin: 'We played plenty of European festivals but we didn't do many in Britain. We never did Glastonbury and didn't do Reading until '94 or something. It was probably a case of offers making a lot of financial sense, and we did get paid well for those European gigs. Plus we had a strong, hard-core following, in Italy in particular, and doing gigs like that cemented our support there. We played one show in a bullring with Killing Joke. That was the last time we saw Rick from the King's Head. By this point he was completely paranoid that Vietcong were hiding behind every bush.'

Billy Chainsaw: 'I saw him one more time. He'd been house-sitting for some gangsterish guy and the place had burned down. He turned up at the office, told us that he was in trouble, and we never saw him again.'

Severin: 'As soon as we thought we'd got the album out of the way, we wrote "Cities In Dust" [October 1985], which turned out to be the big single on *Tinderbox*. I'd recorded a home demo instrumental version thinking it would make a good B-side, but when we took it into the studio and Siouxsie started developing some vocal ideas, she was worried that the song was a bit too catchy.

'We were later invited to perform the song in *Out Of Bounds* [1986], directed by Richard Tuggle, whose first film was *Tightrope* starring Clint Eastwood. That had been set in New Orleans and seemed a bit smarter than your usual action thriller. Unfortunately, *Out Of Bounds* was rubbish. The plot concerned people picking up the wrong bags and chasing each other in cars for drugs. It was "Cities In Dust" that gave us our first mainstream breakthrough in America, although its success had nothing whatsoever to do with the film,

'As it turned out, we finished the single before the album, so we rushed it out and Dave Woods booked us on our longest ever UK tour, taking in all the towns we hadn't played since '81. Just over two weeks into it, we were back in London, playing the first of three nights at Hammersmith Odeon [24 October 1985]. Halfway through "Christine", with Siouxsie leaping all over the stage as usual, I heard this thump. I turned round and she was on the floor holding her leg and screaming her head off.'

PATRICIA MORRISON (Fur Bible): 'We were supporting the Banshees on that tour, and I saw it all. Steven obviously thought someone had thrown something at her and he started yelling at the audience. As it turned out, it was just one of those flukes. She just did a twist and put her knee out.'

SEVERIN: 'It transpired that she'd caught her foot in some cabling, fallen over and her kneecap had popped out. I went off stage and she was in this little anteroom with our security man, who was an SAS marine. She was shouting, "Knock me out or whack it back in!" and he was like, "Nooooo!" She was taken off to Charing Cross Hospital, where her leg was put in a cast.'

SIOUX: 'Hospital again. It was so traumatic. My kneecap ended up round the other side of my leg. I looked down and couldn't believe what I was seeing. Total agony. I was kept waiting at the hospital for hours. It was a Saturday night, and waiting in a bed next to me was this guy who'd been in a knife fight groaning and clutching his stomach. When I finally got seen to, the doctor literally did whack it back in, put it in a plaster cast and gave me loads of painkillers.'

SEVERIN: 'We carried on with the tour with Siouxsie perched on a stool. I figured if she was going to have to sit down on stage she might as well have a useful prop to wave about, so I bought her a cane with a skull on the top of it.'

SIOUX: 'It was a big tour and I knew we'd lose money if we had to pull it. But there were repercussions. Because I had to sit awkwardly, I ended up with a trapped nerve in my back, so I'd have to get driven back down to London to see a specialist. But being static on stage was a novel experience. I started to really enjoy singing and found that I was using my voice differently.'

BUDGIE: 'I tried to keep Siouxsie's morale up with little things like quiet meals in her room and rescuing her from the bathtub. I don't think everyone fully understood the effect the injury had on her. The plaster was kept on her leg for far longer than is normal, as protection until the tour ended. When it came off [29 November], the thigh muscles had atrophied and the physio sessions were painfully slow. She had to continue them for over a year. I could only admire her determination during that period.'

SIOUX: '1984 and 1985 had been a very difficult time in my life. I was feeling helpless and very isolated, but still had to maintain an "onwards and upwards" front. I was being haunted by these past pains and they was eating away inside me. When the cast came off and I saw this shrivelled left leg, I was appalled. The physio stuck electrodes to my knee and I felt like Frankenstein's monster all over again.'

SEVERIN: 'On that tour, Carruthers – who was a great drinking partner – and I decided that no matter where we were we'd find a nightclub and go out after the show. That's pretty difficult in places like Gloucester, but we managed it. The only one I missed was Wolverhampton [7 December 1985]. Of course, the next day, Carruthers came running up and said, "You should have come. I met Noddy Holder!" I was like, "Well, it's bloody Wolverhampton, you go out and you're bound to meet at least one member of Slade."'

BUDGIE: 'We still hadn't quite finished work on *Tinderbox*. Between June and October, we'd fitted in more sessions, writing and recording B-sides and adding things to tracks on the album, but it wasn't until mid-December that we had a first mix.'

SIOUX: 'Severin and Carruthers weren't around much for the mixing of *Tinderbox*. They were in full festive swing and painting the town red.'

April 1986
Tinderbox.

SEVERIN: 'What made some of our best records so enjoyable was that certain elements would always come about as a result of something instinctive in the studio. We'd come back from a restaurant a bit pissed, play and something great would unfold. That never happened with Carruthers, though. On *Tinderbox*, all the songs were carefully worked out, and that was because we had to keep going over them to get him to play what we wanted. Things lose their freshness when you have to do that. He did put in a lot of time and worked hard, but there was definitely something missing.'

SIOUX: 'There was a lot of chemistry within the band at that time, but it was bad chemistry rather than good. However, time has been kind to the album.'

BUDGIE: 'I don't think it was a bad record. I think we salvaged it. But it was an inward-looking album. A lot of the songs were about things that were wrong internally – "This Unrest", "Parties Fall", "Land's End". But with the Churchyard mixes, we'd managed to toughen up the sound. Maybe it was rockier, and not necessarily the direction that the band wanted to go in, but it did give a solid structure for the lyrical self-reflection.'

SEVERIN: 'In May, we took off on our first really major tour of America since 1981. U2 and Psychedelic Furs were both quite big out there, but it was still the era where the idea of being "alternative" hadn't come into use yet and bands like us were still associated with college radio. It was so much easier than the last big tour we'd done there. We had hotel rooms and a lovely Winnebago. Carruthers and I managed to maintain our quest for a different nightclub in every place we played with great success. We even found one in Salt Lake City on a Sunday night, which was definitely a triumph.'

BUDGIE: 'That was the longest and loneliest eight weeks of my life up to that point. Without a drink to level out the adrenaline from the gigs, I became an insomniac. I had fallen off the wagon at the end of March during a short break in the Canary Islands, but gave up again in mid-April. After eating a burger in New York City at the start of the tour, I decided to give up meat, too. It was difficult. I took a lot of photos of sunrises, I cycled and swam, and I cried a lot. I was experiencing emotions I'd never had before.'

Severin: 'It was World Cup year, so I always made sure I found somewhere to watch the football. I was up at eight in the morning to watch Gary Lineker get his hat trick against Poland. But when it came to the quarterfinal against Argentina, we were booked on a plane going down to Houston [22 June 1986]. Arriving at the airport and finding out about Maradona's "Hand of God" thing and England losing was totally depressing.'

Budgie: 'After the tour ended, Siouxsie and I stayed in New York City to attend a preview of *Out Of Bounds* and catch Prince's new movie, *Under The Cherry Moon*. We also saw a beautiful Gustav Klimt exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, and spent our last night there watching the Independence Day firework display over Manhattan from the roof of our old friend Louis Tropia's loft. Sobriety did have its moments!'

Severin: 'When we got back to London, we'd barely unpacked before Dave Woods sent us off again, to Brest in France [12 July 1986], to play. He did that sort of thing a lot. It seemed like we'd be randomly dispatched to the four corners of the earth without any obvious rationale to it.'

Budgie: 'We arrived back at 8:45 in the morning [6 July], but Siouxsie was held up in customs until 1:30pm. There were a few items of clothing that didn't have receipts, though a customs file search also revealed that the group's taxes hadn't been paid in a while. The manager's bed must have been getting higher off the ground after each tour!'

Sioux: 'That concerned me, so I brought it up with Woodsy and was just fobbed off. It must be a mistake or something. We were too busy to be alarmed, but by the end of the year a few niggling things started to happen and Dave began to behave strangely.'

Billy Chainsaw: 'In music, so much is down to chance as well as how you play the game. The Cure appealed to the same people who liked the Banshees and yet they had a string of fucking hits! I suspect they were probably better managed, and surrounded by people who pointed them in the right direction. The Banshees never seemed to have such luck.'

SEVERIN: 'The idea for an album of cover versions had come up regularly, ever since "Dear Prudence", and now [July 1986] seemed a great time to start recording it. *Hyaena* and *Tinderbox* had taken so long, and we wanted to do something quickly and try and get that spontaneity back. We couldn't face writing a whole load of new songs.

'Apart from "Dear Prudence", we'd only ever done cover versions back in the early days, like the Captain Scarlet theme and [T. Rex's] "20th Century Boy". We did record [Ben E King's] "Supernatural Thing" as a B-side once, but doing covers wasn't anything that had particularly appealed to us.'

BUDGIE: 'Even in the John McGeoch days, we'd mess around with [Pink Floyd's] "Arnold Layne" and [Cream's] "White Room", guitar songs we'd run through before Siouxsie turned up for rehearsal. We actually considered "White Room" for *Through The Looking Glass*, but after looking at the lyrics we thought, "We can't do that!"'

SEVERIN: 'The first idea we came up with was Sparks, so we went through all the singles before realising that the best choice was the most obvious one: "This Town Ain't Big Enough For The Both Of Us".

'We weren't sure whether to do a Bowie song. After all, the idea was pretty much inspired by *Pin-Ups*. Siouxsie didn't want to, but I liked the idea of doing something from *The Man Who Sold The World*, such as "After All" or "The Bewlay Brothers"; something people wouldn't expect.

'We went through loads of Tamla songs, but rejected them all because we'd never really listened to the lyrics before. The idea of Siouxsie singing something like "You Can't Hurry Love" was horrible.

'"This Wheel's On Fire" was Siouxsie's choice because that was one of her first musical crushes when she was young. "Strange Fruit" was Carruthers' idea, though I thought we should add a New Orleans funeral march in the middle. We wondered whether we had the balls to do "The Passenger", but Siouxsie liked the lyric, so we did. I wanted to do a Roxy song and "Sea Breezes" seemed just about obscure enough for us to do it. And "Gun" was from John Cale's *Fear*, the only album that Siouxsie and I each owned independently when we first met.'

SIOUX: 'I had to convince Severin to do "Trust In Me", because he felt it was more like a Creatures track. There were a few underlying tensions between us at that time. *Tinderbox* was a great album, but it had been such a long, painful process and that spoiled it for me. Severin had become distant because of business and his girlfriend, Lucy. That's why it was important to find a project that would keep our spirits up, which is why an album of covers was a perfectly reasonable thing to do. Despite the difficulties we had firing John up, it was a lot of fun working with Hedges again. We threw in string sections, brass sections, even a harp player at one point. Things were beginning to feel right again.'

SEVERIN: 'It was great doing that album, and seeing how we could rework songs we liked. And after working with so many producers on *Tinderbox*, we kept things simple and went back to Mike Hedges. His own studio had gone under, so we recorded it in Abbey Road [two block sessions between 27 July and 9 September], which was a thrill too.'

BUDGIE: 'It felt very creative, especially because it was a long period of lucidity for me. As well as quitting drinking, I'd stopped smoking, turned vegetarian and joined a health club. It had been a massive shock to the system. Siouxsie was on the mend, too. She'd quit drinking, given up meat, and started swimming and going to a gym. However, I could clearly see that John was worse for wear by the end of that American tour, and that did a lot to undermine his position in the group.'

SIOUX: 'On "Gun", he added a really straight acoustic guitar bit which sounded like the theme tune to *Blue Peter* or something, so I had this idea of twisting the knobs on the mixing desk and really fucking up the sound to make it more exciting. John was outraged and came storming in accusing me of wrecking some great artistic piece of work. He just wasn't responsive to any kind of invention or creativity. We'd been spoiled by having McGeoch in the band because he was so capable of taking a vague idea and turning it into something. We had to work so hard to get anything out of Carruthers. That's when a lot of the magic went from the band for me. It wasn't equal or spontaneous any more.'

SEVERIN: 'He was all front. I remember sitting in a hotel room with him telling me that Robert had been a rubbish guitarist and that he could have played the stuff on *Hyaena* much better. When he was called upon to prove it, though, he was remarkably uncreative. Trying to get a fresh sound out of him in the studio was like trying to get blood from a stone.'

BUDGIE: '*Looking Glass* was the first time Martin McCarrick stepped into the fold. Of all the various musicians who came and went, I probably enjoyed working with Martin more than anyone else.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK (strings, keyboards): 'Siouxsie had asked me to come up with a string arrangement for "Strange Fruit". I knew Mike Hedges from working with Marc Almond, and while I was there he got me to play keyboard parts. I was literally getting called in every day to do something else. One night during the sessions, I went home one night and said to my girlfriend, "I'd love to join this band." It was such a creative buzz working with people who were amazingly professional in the studio – and seeing at close hand what an amazing drummer Budgie was.'

SIOUX: 'Iggy was in town for rehearsals in October, so we got a chance to play him our version of "The Passenger", which he liked a lot. Budgie and I took him and his wife to Sadler's Wells to see the Central Ballet of China perform, before dining them at a Japanese restaurant. Very civilised and pleasant!'

27 November 1986

The Banshees hit São Paulo, Brazil, the first in a nine-day South American tour.

SIOUX: 'The shows in Brazil were amazing, and the audience went completely bonkers. It was so strange to see all these dark-skinned and tanned fans dressed in black. We had a day in Rio and did four shows in São Paulo, where we had our own crew of bodyguards called the Fonseca Gang, who resembled WWF wrestlers. We couldn't go anywhere without them because the place was so dangerous. The organisers were convinced we were going to get kidnapped.'

SEVERIN: 'From there we flew to Buenos Aires where the show [5 December 1986] was as fantastic as the Brazilian ones had been. We were the first English band to play in Argentina since the Falklands War in 1982, so the security was even tighter than usual. We got out the back of the plane straight onto the tarmac and into a limo with motorcycle outriders, and we were chased by camera crews all the way to the city centre. It was surreal. We went straight into a press conference during which absolutely no one mentioned the war! I found out later that the Polydor people had told journalists that we'd walk out if we were asked for our opinions. I was furious. Half the reason for going was to have a dig at Thatcher.

'We always seemed to go down really well in places where the inhabitants have Latin blood – Spain, Italy, Portugal and South America. Having said that, the show was the first time we'd been spat at in ten years. I've got this abiding image of the audience holding up Union Jacks and gobbing at us. The punks in Buenos Aires hated the government, and sporting the Union Jack was a perfect way of showing it. And those kids were in far more danger for standing up for their beliefs than the punks in England ever were.

'Siouxsie was a vegetarian by then, so she hated the amount of meat they ate over there, but I loved it. I seem to remember the trip being a whirl of huge steaks, washed down with loads of drinks and uncut narcotics. I had a great time.

'After we got back, we went to the [February] 1987 Brit Awards. Siouxsie had just had her hair cut for an *NME* photo session with Anton Corbijn and, because she didn't want anyone to see it until the pictures appeared the following week, she wore a wig.

'The Pet Shop Boys had picked up the award for Best New Band, so we thought we'd tag along with Neil Tennant and go to their party, but they wouldn't let us in. Siouxsie went mad. "What do you mean he can't come in? He's just won Best Band and it's his party!" We stormed out and ended up in a club called Stallions just off Charing Cross Road. We started dancing, completely smashed, and Siouxsie got a bit frisky with one of the girls on the dancefloor. It turned into an almighty ruck and, in the middle of the fracas, her wig came off.

'The next morning's *Daily Mirror* had this big story about the Stallions episode, with the girl who'd had the dancefloor fight with Siouxsie quoted as saying, "She got really cocky, so I pushed her to the floor and her hair came off in my hand. It was all grey and patchy underneath." Of course, the girl was completely disproved by the photos in the *NME* the following week.'

March 1987
Through The Looking Glass.

SEVERIN: 'It sold pretty well, about the same as *Tinderbox*, so there weren't any mass defections because it was a covers album. But the reviews weren't great and we weren't surprised. We hadn't been enjoying particularly good critical reaction in England for some time. The first single was "This Wheel's On Fire" and one of the reviews said something like, "Why don't they just go away?" Things had cooled around the time of *Hyaena*. There'd been a strike at the music press which lasted about two months, and had coincided with its release. When they started printing again, the rock press decided they didn't like us any more. It was astonishing how quickly they turned on us.

'I think the defining moment was Live Aid. That led to a kind of monarchy consisting of everyone who'd joined in, people like Phil Collins and Spandau Ballet. The three bands that had defined cutting-edge music in the UK were the Banshees, New Order and The Bunnymen, and none of us were on Live Aid. So we were written out of history.

'Bowie was a big fan of the album and later invited us to play on his *Glass Spider* tour because of it. The only other feedback we got from an artist we'd covered was when we met Ron and Russell from Sparks. They'd been invited to this record-company function purely because they loved our version of "This Town Ain't Big Enough For The Both Of Us" and wanted to meet us. That was nice, but to be honest, when we were making the record, there was never any desire for the people whose songs they were to like our versions.'

BUDGIE: 'Back in January, we'd been to Portmeirion in north Wales (on the set where they filmed *The Prisoner*) to record "The Passenger" for *The Tube*, and I think that was John Carruthers' final stand.'

SIOUX: 'Another strange thing happened. Steven brought along Lucy. That was the first time a partner had been invited to join us when we were working. We hardly saw him except for the few hours we spent filming.

'A couple of weeks later [16 January 1987], the three of us had a big powwow about Carruthers. He wasn't fitting in. I don't remember having one decent conversation with him. He had a chip on his shoulder and I never found out why. The only thing we ever agreed on was the brilliance of Jimi Hendrix.'

SEVERIN: 'It was obvious that Carruthers wasn't 100 per cent into the band. He seemed more interested in what the band could do for him and how he could use the fame it brought. With McGeoch, it wasn't really a case of sacking him, we just didn't invite him back. With Carruthers, though, it was definitely giving him the boot. I had to go round to his flat and tell him, which I hated doing. I tried being as diplomatic as I could, and he looked up and said, "Well, at least I got to go to Brazil." He obviously wasn't that gutted.'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'There always seemed to be a whipping boy. Robert Smith may have been fronting The Cure, but when he was a Banshee he was "Fat Bob". Any new boy has his work cut out. Aside from learning the old stuff, he's got to come up with new ideas, too, though I don't think John was allowed to spread his wings as much as he would have liked. Banshees guitarists were like the Spinal Tap drummer. They would always explode in one way or another.'

SIOUX: 'Managers, too. The day we decided that Carruthers should go we'd also aired our feelings about Woodsy. We'd all noticed something strange about him. Two days later, we arranged this chat with him that lasted four hours. We asked about the tax and whether there was anything else that was wrong, but he assured us that there had been a big misunderstanding and that the accountants would take care of it all. It was a charade that would continue for months.'

8 'Everybody Went Wobbly At Different Times. If It Wasn't A Band Member, It Was A Manager'

– Budgie

STEVEN: 'Martin McGarrick had worked with us on *Looking Glass* and on The Glove album, so we knew him pretty well and liked what he did. We thought it would be good to give the group a different dynamic, so we decided to expand from a four-piece to a five-piece. To persuade Martin to join, we did what we always did when recruiting new band members. We took him to a Japanese restaurant in Soho, gave him a slap-up meal and plied him with loads of sake. By the end of the night, he was a Banshee.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'It was a daunting experience. We went out to Fuji on Brewer Street, one of those ridiculously expensive '80s Japanese restaurants that was just becoming fashionable. They gave me more sake than I'd ever seen, but it was a slightly odd encounter. Severin discussed religion, and Siouxsie talked about her brother. Most disconcertingly, they looked different. Siouxsie's big backcombed chignon had gone, and she was sporting a crop hairdo, topped off with a very nice dress. I'd never seen her like that before.

'As the night progressed, I thought, "When are we gonna talk about me joining the band?"Eventually, there was a lull in the conversation and Severin leaned over and said, "Well, do you want to join?" I said, "Yes," and that was it. We carried on knocking back the sake and brandy. I vaguely remember ending up at Steven's. His girlfriend Lucy was trying to talk to me, but I couldn't understand a thing she was saying. They must have put me in a cab home, because I woke up next morning to find that I'd wrecked the place where I was living. I'd also been shouting my head off about "Steven's Golden Staircase". To this day, I don't know what that was about.'

SEVERIN: 'I was living in the top floor of a converted house. There'd obviously been an attic in a previous incarnation of the building, but the way it had been converted meant that the staircase leading up to it remained. I decided to turn it into a folly, had all the woodwork painted gold, with the centrepiece being this golden staircase leading nowhere.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'I got *Join Hands* for my 16th birthday and it was a revelation. There was so much more going on than, "Fuck off, I'm gonna do what I want cos I'm a punk," The Sex Pistols' line. The Banshees' subject matter was dark and twisted – that had appealed to me since I'd fallen in love with Arthur Brown's "Fire" as a kid.

'I'd been to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, which was where I first met Anne Stevenson, the only other obvious punk there. Through her connections, I started doing session work, and eventually met the Banshees through Marc Almond.'

MARC ALMOND: 'Martin had been an integral member of my Willing Sinners backing band for some time when Siouxsie and Steven stole him from me. I never quite forgave them for that! He was a key element of my sound at the time, but I wasn't able to offer him a full-time commitment. I was a little upset, but I was happy for him that he'd moved on to a band like the Banshees. Knowing the tensions that existed between Sioux, Steven and Budgie, I also knew how difficult it would be for him to ever feel like a permanent Banshee. I thought of all those guitarists who'd been banished to Banshee Siberia!'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'When, after *Looking Glass*, Steven phoned me to ask if I'd do more work with them, it seemed to be on the basis of live work or helping out in the studio when I was available. I said that I didn't really wanna do that, but if they were looking for someone to join the band perhaps we could talk.'

BUDGIE: 'The idea of expanding the band was first mooted when we played Pete Townshend's anti-heroin charity show at St James's Church, Piccadilly [10 April 1985]. We'd brought in [The Flowerpot Men's] Adam Peters to play cello and keyboards, and so were able to play several songs we'd never performed live before. It seemed a good direction to go in.'

Billy Chainsaw: 'If Martin hadn't joined, I don't think the Banshees would have been able to sustain it for as long as they did. Either by their own inability, or by Siouxsie and Steven's preference, the guitarists never contributed that much to the songwriting. Martin had been classically trained and he added a whole new dimension, especially in terms of songwriting. He just made everything bigger.'

Sioux: 'Between February and April, we'd recorded a couple of sessions as a three-piece, where we worked on "She's Cuckoo", "Something Blue" and "Peek-A-Boo". It was a relief not having to worry about John. When Severin brought the lyrics for "The Killing Jar" at our next rehearsal, and we worked on the music for it, we also discussed the dynamics of the band. We couldn't face another guitarist, so I gave Martin a call, he came down a few times, and it went well. And he seemed very easy to work with.'

Martin McCarrick: 'They'd been together for 11 years when I joined [in April 1987], and I sensed they wanted to explore new directions. There had been a definite backlash, at least in England, where they weren't prepared to let the Banshees grow. They just wanted to hear "Spellbound" and "Arabian Knights". It must have been odd for the band to work with keyboards and cello instead of guitar, and it did take a while for me to settle in. My first task was to learn what seemed like 300 Banshees songs, and decide how we were gonna do them. While quite a few already had keyboards, I did try to recreate guitar parts, but it was obvious they needed a guitarist. It wouldn't have been Siouxsie And The Banshees without one.'

Jon Klein (guitarist): 'Severin's girlfriend Lucy pushed my case, so I auditioned, and was invited back for a final. It was between me and [Japan's] Rob Dean, who'd done a lot of session work and was a very tight player. Severin went for me, Budgie went for the other guy, and it was Severin's vote that counted.'

Budgie: 'Some of the other guitarists were accomplished players, if perhaps a little more studious. Jon was easily the best character but I think the decision was made for the wrong reasons. I remember saying to Jon that it might all end in tears ...'

Martin McCarrick: 'We had a few days of guitar auditions and you should have seen the crock of shite that came through! Siouxsie had a field day taking the piss. Some even turned up dressed as Severin, complete with high-necked shirts and suits. Jon was this mad-professor type with a bit of style and flamboyance. It worked immediately.'

Jon Klein: 'My brief was to play anything I wanted so long as it didn't sound like a guitar. One of my first tasks was a request from Siouxsie to play "an exploding horse going over a cliff".'

Billy Chainsaw: 'Jon was a noise merchant rather than a virtuoso and he was great at it.'

Jon Klein: 'My first memory of the Banshees was hearing "Metal Postcard" as a teenager, on John Peel. The voice was so weird, almost atonal, and with a *Doctor Who* vibe. The music was really angular. And when you saw the pictures – Siouxsie was clearly an icon from day one.

'I'd seen them on the *Juju* tour, a fabulous stage production that basically got hijacked by Big Country, who took it to America. That happened a lot. Depeche Mode had been schoolboys with synthesisers who turned up their collars before reinventing themselves with a darker Banshee vibe. And then there was that nice middle-class boy [Robert Smith] who makes an album with the Banshees, then reappears with his own band [The Cure], reborn with smudged lipstick and big black hair! The Banshees were always a bit harder to penetrate.

'Specimen had been responsible for the Batcave scene, but as a band we never quite hit the moment. We got signed to Sire in the States, had a centre spread in *Rolling Stone*, and it looked like it was going big time but we managed to fuck it up. It was a good time to join the Banshees, just as they were having this shake-up.

'My first night out with Siouxsie [12 May 1987] ended with a punch-up. We'd been rehearsing at John Henry's in Caledonian Road and went off to the Limelight afterwards to celebrate. It was a private party and Boy George's mate, Fat Tony, was DJing. It was his birthday, he'd bought everybody champagne, and there was plenty of coke around too. He obviously felt upstaged by the Ice Queen. He comes over and starts telling her she's not welcome, and that she's a bit of a has-been. As he turns away, she gives him a bunch of fives straight in the gob, and all hell breaks loose. I remember having to ground someone who was trying to hit her.'

Sioux: 'Within the band, even Severin and I were getting on well again. One day in April, I'd been relaxing at home in my basement flat in Elsham Road, and I looked up and saw this guy wanking in front of my window. It was the most bizarre thing. Part of me thought I should go out and whack it, get my water pistol and shoot it, or at least take a Polaroid of it! But I closed the internal shutters and called the police in case he was a danger to the neighbours' pets. Later that evening, I got this SOS call from Severin who sounded really upset. I went over to see him at around midnight to find that his flat had been virtually destroyed during a huge bust-up with Lucy. I cheered him up by telling him about my flasher, we laughed about some old Derek And Clive jokes and I finally left at around 5:30 in the morning.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'The first thing Jon and I worked on as full members was "Song From The Edge Of The World" [July 1987]. It was an awful experience. No one seemed happy. Severin and Siouxsie were arguing. There was no creative spark, just this awful unrest. I thought, "Have I done the wrong thing by joining this band?"'

STEVEN: 'It was intended as a way to break the ice with John. We'd already written and demoed it with John Carruthers and we'd been looking for the right producer. Trevor Horn had listened to it but said, "I can't do better than that," which was nice but didn't help much. We later found out that his wife, Jill Sinclair, hated us and had told him, "Don't you dare." We ended up using Mike Thorne – one of my worst suggestions yet. He'd done the first three Wire albums, which I really liked, but I hadn't met him since the late '70s.

'He was a fucking disaster. He turned up at the studio wearing a Lycra T-shirt with built-in shoulder pads – that should have set the alarm bells ringing. He'd been to public school and had a really academic approach to everything, while at the same time thinking he was Brian Eno, which he wasn't. I'm sure that Siouxsie still hates the record because of him. It was the only single that never made it onto *Twice Upon A Time*, simply because she hated the idea of seeing his name on one of our albums.'

JON KLEIN: 'Thorne really came in with an attitude. We were in the Beatles room at Abbey Road and I said I wanted to try something. He said, "You wanna put an overdub on my record?", put his head between my speakers, thrust his hands on his hips and said, "Impress me." I just cranked it up, like, "Fuck you!" His bedside manner wasn't good.

'Siouxsie phoned him up one night and said, "I can't sleep because I'm worried about the vocal sound, and if I can't sleep I don't think you should. If you don't get it right by tomorrow, you're fired." When she mentioned Nat 'King' Cole, it was the engineer who finally twigged, not Thorne.'

SIOUX: 'We ended up going out with Thorne to New York, where his new Synclavier was. We spent five days in June at the Sigma Sound Studios and it was a waste of time. His stupid Synclavier didn't impress me at all. Budgie and I later met up with Louis, a friend of ours who ran a club called Who Gives A Fuck?, which seemed appropriate at that time.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'Our first show with the Banshees was at a festival in Berlin on a bill with Iggy Pop. Jon and I were still finding our feet, and the others were coming to terms with having keyboards and technology on stage.'

JON KLEIN: '"Dazzle" was the opening song, and I remember hearing this massive string section coming out over the PA and thinking, "Is my hand gonna move?" The Banshees always got stick in Germany. We turned up to a sound check once to find that one of the roadies had laid down a gaffer-tape swastika on the stage. That probably didn't help.

'The road crew were legendary. I'd not been in the band a week when Dave Woods said, "I've employed this guy to work for you, but don't worry – he's not as scary as he looks. We've been having trouble controlling him at gigs, so we've decided to employ him as your guitar tech. He's six foot three, covered in tattoos and piercings, and his name's Captain Scarlet." The first time I went to the pub with him, he got his knob out and showed me his Prince Albert.'

SIOUX: 'Martin and Jon were nervous, and that made us nervous too. I knew I enjoyed their company, even at this early stage, but anything could happen in the future. I didn't dare imagine that it might be permanent. Things had gone wrong so many times.'

25 July 1987
One-day 'Big Top' festival at Finsbury Park, North London.

STEVEN: 'It was a brilliant bill: we were supported by Gaye Bykers On Acid, Psychic TV, Wire and The Fall. And it should have made us a lot of money, but it didn't. Dave ran away with it all. We knew that must have been the case because, later on, we couldn't find a single invoice or receipt that related to the event.'

SIOUX: 'Finsbury Park was a brilliant show. I remember Woodsy asking to be paid in cash. Ding-a-ling-a-ling! He said we'd get more that way, but I'd begun to question the bullshit by then.'

SEVERIN: 'After the gig, we were sitting in the dressing room and Dave's girlfriend walked in. She looked like death, completely emaciated.'

SIOUX: 'That was a shock because she was very straight, a typical prim English girl. Boring really. Certainly not someone you'd ever expect to start taking smack.'

JON KLEIN: 'The band had a huge live profile at the time, this vast touring machine that travelled in reasonable comfort, and was never given an itinerary that was a ball-breaker. I'd heard about the *Juju* tour, the classic psycho situation where they came home completely exhausted to be told that all the money they'd made on the album had been lost by doing the tour. It seemed a real professional setup.'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'I think the band were often sent out on tour when perhaps they shouldn't have gone. Sometimes, they'd be bustled off in the middle of recording. Perhaps there was an ulterior motive and might have been money. When you're in the thick of all that activity, you don't always realise what's happening. It was bad management, and it prevented them from becoming even more successful than they already were.'

JON KLEIN: 'Dave Woods would draw diagrams explaining in great detail why you couldn't have what you wanted. He was quite clever. He realised, for example, that by doing two nights with Bowie in a stadium in Anaheim, LA [8 and 9 August 1987], we could fund an entire month around the US. Siouxsie was reluctant at first. She said "He's crap now!" and she was the big Bowie fan. It was the *Glass Spider* tour, though we preferred to call it the "Plastic Jiffy" tour because the set was terrible. It looked like a load of condoms hanging off this one giant condom.'

SIOUX: 'Bowie briefly introduced himself, though it was literally a handshake. He was watching from the side of the stage and it made Severin really nervous and fluff his basslines. Bowie wasn't at his peak then, that's for sure, but he'd been very important to me in the past and that memory hadn't changed. It was Lodger that first spoiled it for me.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'In the beginning, they'd have a go at us about clothes. They'd been fed up with Robert turning up on stage in his pyjamas or John Carruthers wearing jeans and a sweatshirt. Siouxsie's pet hate was stonewash jeans, which for some strange reason she always called pebbledash jeans. They wanted the look to be more uniform, like a latter-day Spiders From Mars. For that American tour, we had these weird, specially made Nehru suits with high collars, tight trousers and coats of various lengths. Siouxsie was wearing Lycra and lots of feathers, and Budgie would usually take his colour code from her. Thankfully, that was the only tour where we were told what to wear. I felt ridiculous getting dressed up in a silk suit every night.'

SIOUX: 'Shortly after returning from the States, it was Billy Chainsaw's wedding [5 September 1987]. Dave hadn't done anything about a present for him. Billy was a video and film addict, so the day before I went out and got him the biggest television and video I could find. The TV was encased in leather and it was ginormous!

'Meanwhile, we're still trying to get Dave to explain what's going on with our tax and financial affairs. It had really started to niggle me, and I know when that happens because my body starts getting weird. My skin starts erupting and I get stomach pains. My doctor referred me to another doctor, but no one could find what the cause was. It was a shame because I'd only recently got myself back together fitness-wise.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'They had a bunch of songs that Severin had already demoed on his four-track Portastudio. Siouxsie tended to sing her ideas into a Dictaphone, which for some strange reason wobbled, so there'd always be this weird gargling sound when she played them back. We spent several weeks rehearsing the *Peepshow* material in this big old house in Ardingly in Sussex.'

JON KLEIN: 'That's where I first met Mike Hedges. It was Bonfire Night, and it was all a bit medieval with hundreds of families going "Oooooh!" to all these fireworks. This one voice kept piping up, "Crap! Rubbish!" That was Hedges, this ginger Viking with his knob out, having a piss in the middle of the village green.'

SEVERIN: 'The fire was colossal, and at one point Hedges almost fell straight into it. It took about three of us to hold this huge bloke back from toppling in, but we didn't really want him to catch on fire, partly because we had an album to do.'

SIOUX: 'The whole place seemed very pagan. It was as if we were doing the whole thing on the set of *The Wicker Man.* We introduced a few found sounds from the environment on the record, such as the fairground noises on "Carousel", which had been recorded at a fair that turned up in a nearby field. That's the sound of real Victorian steam engines all mangled up.'

SEVERIN: 'The nearest town was Haywards Heath, where Budgie and I came across this strange home-brewing shop. In the corner we saw a yard-of-ale glass and some frighteningly intoxicating local drink called White Shield, so we had this yard-of-ale contest back at the studio, which was won by Jon Klein, who had this remarkable ability to neck it down in one. He was like a pelican. In fact, "The Pelican" became his nickname after that.'

JON KLEIN: 'I beat Hedges and that was totally unheard of! By the time I'd got a few down me, I had a kamikaze death wish. It became more dangerous when we ran out of beer and started using this hardcore eight per cent fizzy cider. We ended up jamming, and I passed out. As I hit the floor, my head landed on the distortion pedal and the bastards recorded it! I was fully expecting the racket to turn up on a B-side.'

BUDGIE: 'Martin and Jon inspired a renewed sense of confidence within the group. There was a new mood of frivolity and craziness, too, and the more crazy we got, the more it balanced the sense of purpose and duty that Steven felt we owed the band's history. It took three clowns to balance that. Steven was also very keen to get the business side under control because of what we were still going through with Dave Woods.'

SIOUX: 'There was an underlying sense of foreboding. A couple of weeks before leaving for Ardingly, the country had been devastated by huge, unprecedented storms. As we drove down there, we passed through a landscape ripped apart by all these fallen trees with their roots showing. The sessions had been going well until mid-November, when I started bleeding and was taken to the hospital in London Bridge for a biopsy.

The stomach pains were severe so the aptly named Doctor Forecast kept me in for two days' tests. I made an attempt to get my old doctor's records from the time I was hospitalised at 14, in case there might be a link, and I insisted that no way would I undergo surgery.

'After the first sessions at Ardingly, we were back in London in December, and I went to the Serpentine Gallery to see an exhibition by Posados titled "Day Of The Dead". I loved it. It got me thinking about All Souls' Day and how Halloween is traditionally associated with blackness and witches. In Mexico, they paint their skulls in bright colours, and the whole thing is a real irreverent celebration of death. I later used it as inspiration for the song, "El Dia De Los Muertos".

'Around Xmas, I also saw Dave. He seemed fine and said the band's accounts were practically there. After we'd begun the *Peepshow* sessions again down at Ardingly early in January, I didn't see him again, but Budgie did. He said, "Bloody hell. Dave's changed so much physically." Apparently, he was gaunt and non-communicative. We were concerned for him but at the same time we were worried about our situation. I think we assumed that he also had a problem and that it, too, had accelerated out of control.'

Severin: 'Another clue that something was amiss was when he refused to answer our phone calls. He'd bought himself a house in Canonbury and started to work from home. We began to suspect that something was going on, but didn't really know what.'

Billy Chainsaw: 'I remember being questioned as to whether I thought Dave was a heroin addict. I said "No" because I'd not witnessed it. I knew he liked Valium, but I didn't know they hadn't seen money from the Finsbury Park show. Something must have gone fucking wrong there.'

Severin: 'Dave had started off as a student promoter before joining an agency called March Artists. He booked us into the Vortex and places like that, and he always talked of a master plan for us in terms of what The Beatles did. He was the most unlikely person you could imagine to get caught up in heroin addiction. And he kept it hidden for so long. During the King's Head days, we always took the piss out of him for being a bit of a Valium queen.'

Budgie: 'We said goodbye to Dave at the train station at Ardingly, when we were still writing *Peepshow*. He simply walked out of our lives and we never saw him again. I know he loved our new songs, "The Killing Jar", but he simply walked out of our lives. It was really sad and shocking, seeing this little man who I'd loved turn into a shell. When you looked at him, you knew no one was at home.'

SIOUX: 'We began recording *Peepshow* late in January and, with no sign of Dave, Budgie and I suspected what might be going on. There was no communication and certainly no answers. It was very stressful, not least because we had this great album in the making. In mid-February, Budgie and I took off to Venice for a few days to shoot some images for "Peek-A-Boo" at the Mardi Gras festival, but it didn't help. We took the situation out on each other so badly that we nearly split up while we were there.

'When we got back, Severin reciprocated my visit to him in 1987 and we talked – about Budgie, about business, about everything. And we wrote a song together, "The Last Beat Of My Heart". With all our relationships suffering around this time, it was good to rekindle our writing partnership, and bond on a friendship level too.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'When we were working on *Peepshow*, I remember Sioux being on the phone and Severin very quietly on another listening in. It was obvious something was going on. The Banshees got involved in every part of their business, or at least they seemed to. Certainly Severin appeared to know what was going on.'

JON KLEIN: 'I walked into a room one day and everyone was in a strop. Martin and I thought, "God, what have we done." It was the cold routine. We later heard that a £100,000-plus tax bill had arrived.'

SIOUX: 'The bombshell dropped on 17 March 1988. That's when we got the letter from the accountant confirming that everything we'd suspected was true. We also got a letter saying that Dave Woods would be meeting with the accountants on 29 March to sort it out. But where was he? We still couldn't get into the office because it was barricaded. He formally resigned on 3 May, when the paperwork was handed over to us, and then disappeared. All I could do to respond was write a B-side, "Are You Still Dying Darling?"

'If I saw Dave now, I don't know how I'd react. I'd like to think that I'd smack him one, because I'd be letting myself down if I didn't, but I've just blanked him out of my mind. I'm not one for nursing any bitterness, because it's only going to make me feel bad, not him. Why should I waste my energy? I don't even know if he's alive and, frankly, I don't care.'

BUDGIE: 'Everybody went wobbly at different times. If it wasn't a band member, it was a manager. Yet musically we were hitting a peak again, probably for the first time since the John McGeoch days. After Martin joined, it had become very easy. The ideas came flooding out.'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'I don't think the band ever knew this, but in that period after Dave, when there was no manager, a couple of people at Polydor had suggested that I manage the Banshees. They saw me as a go-between between band and record company. I'd been getting more involved with the making of the videos and the artwork, I'd drawn everything for the "Cities In Dust" sleeve, I'd started designing the merchandise and I'd just become the band's PA. But I wasn't interested in management. I thought the idea was ludicrous, and I could see that we might end up falling out over it, which I certainly didn't want. There was a load of shit left – and I didn't want to be shovelling it.'

SIOUX: 'We needed a quick stopgap. We knew about the coke but then the other two had been smackheads and had totally deceived us about it. Coke was more manageable, so we thought. Everyone dabbled a bit. It was a party drug. We needed someone to take instructions while we were on tour and he happened to be around. When we were finishing *Peepshow* at Marquee Studios, he'd come down with a load of coke. It was pretty obvious that Severin hadn't chosen him for any managerial abilities; rather for the fact that he could get good gear.'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'That really surprised me. Having got rid of the two previous managers because of their drug addictions, they then go and employ someone who could get hold of more drugs. Things were getting really blurry.'

SEVERIN: 'Paul was a fan, his nickname was Suspect, and we knew when we took him on that he was a bit of a wide boy. Coke? Yeah, he was well connected! But it was more a case of being in the right place at the right time.'

SIOUX: 'At that point Budgie wasn't drinking and had become fairly evangelical about his own temperance. He was very disapproving about anyone else doing anything untoward, which was a bit of a pain in the arse, but it ensured that at least one of us was fairly grounded. He didn't hit it off with Paul at all, and was extremely annoyed that Paul and his girlfriend just seemed to be doing coke all the time.'

BUDGIE: 'After my first meeting with Paul was cancelled, he turned up a day later completely red-eyed. I was as pure as the driven snow during a lengthy period of abstinence, and I was hyper-aware of anybody screwing up. Unfortunately, I could just sense disaster, so my way of dealing with it was getting lost in the new record.'

July 1988
'Peek-A-Boo'.

JON KLEIN: 'During my first week with the Banshees, Siouxsie had this Walkman on and said, "I'm listening to my new single." It was a cassette of something they'd done with Mike Hedges on the previous album and they'd simply switched the tape over and played it backwards to see what it would sound like.'

SEVERIN: 'If you play tapes backwards and record the echoes, you get a very '60s effect. When we played "Gun" backwards, we got the sound that gave us the intro for "Peek-A-Boo".'

SIOUX: 'It sounded fantastic. I'm a real sucker for things played backwards anyway, so I'd written this song around it. It was gonna be a B-side, but as soon as I put the vocals on it, it was like, "Hold on there, girlie!" It was originally destined for a B-side, but Severin and Budgie thought it was far too good for that, so we hung on to it and saved it for the *Peepshow* sessions. It was obvious it was gonna be the first single.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'It was basically a hip-hop beat, and more Prince than Banshees. My feeling was that it had hung around for a long time with no one quite knowing what to do on it.'

JON KLEIN: 'We added this weird intro that didn't sound like a guitar, Budgie did a middle section that sounded like something The Chemical Brothers later did, and Captain Scarlet discovered this cut-away '70s bass with two big speakers to create this deep farting sound. Polydor seemed to think it was commercial suicide.'

SEVERIN: 'The sound was awesome, and it's the fact that every line is delivered into a different microphone that gives the song its strangeness. No one believed it was made with real instruments rather than computer effects. They didn't really know what to make of it. In fact the first reviews claimed that the Banshees had "gone baggy".'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'A lot of it was Mike and a lot of it was accidental. The only notated thing on the finished record was the accordion. There's not an awful lot of recognisable music on there. It was really driven by backwards brass and drums with Budgie playing bits over the top. It had this disjointed feel about it, a really fucked-up sound, and that's what was great about it. The old-style Banshees melodrama had disappeared. This sound was cinematic. The album title sums it up perfectly.'

SIOUX: 'As "Peek-A-Boo" was charting, an odd story appeared in the *Mirror* claiming that I'd had plastic surgery. I decided to sue but the barrister told me that I couldn't get them on the fact that they'd lied. It was only when I told him I'd written a song criticising plastic surgery ["Paradise Place" on *Kaleidoscope*] that he said we had a clear case, because the story had made me look like a hypocrite. The law works in mysterious ways.

'Around the same time, my suspicions about Paul O'Reilly were confirmed when he accompanied me to a meeting with Barbara Daly of The Body Shop. I wanted get something in the *Peepshow* tour progamme about using cosmetics that were not tested on animals. It was obvious that he was out of his depth. Severin had convinced me he was fine, but Paul was becoming a terrible influence on him. During the mixing of *Peepshow*, Paul would be verbally abusive to him, and Severin didn't seem to mind. That was very out of character. The coke thing they had going was getting out of control. I wasn't Snow White, but I didn't like to see the desperation. From then on, I was on my guard.'

September 1988
Peepshow.

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'Mike Hedges had been brilliant throughout *Peepshow*. Jon Klein would probably say differently because Hedges was a bit anti guitars at the time and that made Jon's life fairly difficult. He's part producer, part vibe merchant, and he'd create an atmosphere that encouraged you to enjoy what you were doing. If he thought Siouxsie might like to sing in a tent one day, he'd go and buy a tent and put it up. But despite – or because of – his extravagances, he always delivered the goods.'

SEVERIN: 'It had been a magical moment when we came up with "The Last Beat Of My Heart", but there tends to be a moment on every album where it all somehow comes together. It took a long time to get it right, though, and I remember going round to Siouxsie's flat to finish off the lyrics. It was the first time we'd done anything like that together since *Join Hands,* so it felt special to be collaborating like that again. It was the one song on the record that I was determined we had to get right, and we must have mixed it five or six times until we were completely satisfied with it.'

BUDGIE: 'It was almost a premonition song. It was so sad, an intense expression of how far you would go for somebody. I remember the mix being squeezed out of that last session, but there were still niggling moments about how loud the drums and the accordion were. It was a difficult birth, but a beautiful baby. For the next few years, we'd open our shows with it. It became a song of strength, partly because it was so out of character.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'Siouxsie's singing on "Melt!" had been incredibly sexy, but I'd never heard her sing like this before, and so tenderly. It was already a lovely piece of music, but until she'd added her part it didn't really make any sense. The song is so fragile-sounding, which is what gives it its beauty and atmosphere. I seem to remember Severin crying when he first heard it. That was quite shocking.'

BUDGIE: '"Carousel" had been around for ages, and I'd written the music for it, but it didn't get past the Severin filter. It would always be, "Why would we wanna do that? It's a Budgie idea." Or, "I'm not putting a bassline on that." It was a bit Spinal, really. I wasn't a songwriter, but now and then ideas would emerge that I thought would make valid contributions.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'I thought I'd contributed a lot to the songwriting on *Peepshow*, especially on a song like "Ornaments Of Gold". I'd mentioned to Severin back at Ardingly that we should talk about publishing, but he said, "We don't normally give publishing on the first album," which I thought was odd. I was still new to the band, though, so I wasn't going to start creating ructions. It wasn't anything that particularly bothered me, at least not then.'

JON KLEIN: '"No publishing on the first album, mate!" It was a bit Tin Pan Alley, but to be honest, they were never looking for collaborators. They wanted people to spark off against or to decorate, which could be argued *is* writing ... It wasn't a deal-breaker with them at the time.'

SEVERIN: 'Martin and Jon remained in the band for seven years or more. They knew what the deal was and they were very happy with it. The band was already well established, and they knew they were walking straight into a good situation.'

SIOUX: 'Considering what we'd been through, it was entirely understandable that we were more cautious. I remember them getting a healthy retainer and being really happy with it.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'Musically it was working well. Behind the scenes, though, it was an odd time because of changes at Polydor and, of course, the management situation and all the nonsense that went off around that.'

BUDGIE: 'Paul O'Reilly had got the office together in Notting Hill Gate, and there was plenty of talk, and endless meetings going on. A great deal of work was going into the whole *Peepshow* project – the album, the tours, the videos, the stage presentation. We had a model of the stage in the office, and we would think, "Are we really gonna build this?" It was hugely adventurous, obviously expensive, and it was probably only because of Paul's inexperience that we got the go-ahead for it. Previously, people had always made sure there'd been a surplus of money, probably so they could pocket some of it. All the money we made on the *Peepshow* tour went into the production.'

TIM COLLINS (tour manager): 'I'd always loved working with the Banshees, which I'd done back in 1980/81, and again in 1983, when I manned the office while Dave [Woods] went on holiday. He never hired me back and, though I never knew why, I always suspected that it was fear on his part. So when O'Reilly made the offer for me to become tour manager, I jumped at it. What I didn't realise was that the band were massively underfunded and working way beyond their income. There was this moment when O'Reilly drove me to a meeting and I produced a budget that showed a potential loss of £100,000 for the next tour. They were impressed by the paperwork, but I was fearful for my new job because they might have chosen to cancel the tour.'

3 September 1988

A six-week tour of Britain and Europe begins with a festival date in Lausanne, Switzerland.

SIOUX: 'The theme of the album and stage show had been influenced by my interest in a late '20s/'30s vibe – Marlene Dietrich and Louise Brooks. Despite the way they remember it, the boys were fitted out in stagewear, though they were able to choose the colours and the cut. It was a very black and white theme, and much more theatrical, probably because I'd been going to the theatre a lot more, seeing things like Chekhov and Tom Stoppard's *Artist Descending A Staircase*. I wanted to move away from rock 'n' roll lighting and make more use of the stage, especially with the lights. The clothing thing was mainly to help Jon. His dress sense closely reflected his personality, which was lovely, but I didn't want a Dennis The Menace crossed with a Freddie Kruger character on stage to distract from the illusion.'

BUDGIE: 'We did that European tour with Tim Collins fronting the entire operation on an American Express card.'

SEVERIN: 'The stage set was really elaborate. We'd start off the show right at the front of the stage, and then a series of curtains would drop to the floor to reveal each band member. You had to be careful where you stood, because all the drapes had little weights on them.'

SIOUX: 'As each curtain dropped, someone at the side of the stage would pull them away so the whole thing looked seamless. However, it was a recipe for disaster. Inevitably, one night Jon Klein got rolled up in the drapes and dragged away with them.'

JON KLEIN: 'It was in this fucking great barn, and the walk to the stage was over all these ramps. It was like *The Mousetrap*. I was approaching the monitor when part of the cable got tangled around my foot. There were 100,000 people watching, all the house lights were up and there was complete silence on stage. I'd fallen flat on my face and there'd been this almighty *ker-chung*. It felt like I was down there for ten minutes. I thought, "Now I'm in trouble."'

SEVERIN: 'During that tour, we made a welcome detour to Ibiza to promote "The Killing Jar", the second single from *Peepshow*, on MTV. We were being interviewed about what we thought of the island when Budgie started leaping around like a lunatic. He was convinced something was wrong so we ended the interview and went to the dressing room. We called a local doctor out and he fiddled about in Budgie's ear, then pulled out this fucking enormous moth. It must have been giving Budgie hell, but even that didn't put of a damper on the evening.

'I loved the whole Ibiza scene, but obviously it was even better on E. We were at this club called Pasha, and they played the music really loud with the fans going mental, I finally understood why everyone was getting so enthusiastic about acid house. It didn't mean we were suddenly going to start making dance records, but we did absorb some of those influences.'

JON KLEIN: 'Tempers sometimes ran high during the *Peepshow* tour. I punched out a window backstage in Liverpool because Steven had been kicking my set-list off the stage. I later found out he was trying to get at my roadie, but I'd taken it the wrong way and starting booting his monitor. We'd nearly ended up having fisticuffs on stage. We'd flown back from Greece earlier that day, and Siouxsie's underwear had been stolen in baggage. To make matters worse, a sound guy had put his foot through Martin's antique cello. The tour manager's reaction was "I suppose you gotta laugh," but Martin retorted, "No, explain to me why that's funny?"'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'It was a dark time in Banshee history, at least behind the scenes. *Peepshow* had been released, we were touring Europe with this huge production and massive crew, and we were about to go to the States. And yet Paul O'Reilly, the guy in control, didn't know what was going on at all.'

BUDGIE: 'I was sober throughout that time, so it wasn't dark for me. It was illuminating! There were problems with management, but it was undoubtedly the most adventurous tour we'd ever staged.'

TIM COLLINS: 'The day after the Royal Albert Hall show [21 September

1988], O'Reilly managed to leave £5,000 of the band's money at the dry-cleaners. I'm not even sure the band ever knew that. He was mortified, though Chain [Billy Chainsaw] managed to persuade him to retrace his steps. When he finally got there, O'Reilly asked, "I don't suppose..." and the guy behind the counter finished the sentence for him: "...you found a brown paper bag with £5,000 quid in it? Well, yes I did!"'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'I was dubious about O'Reilly from day one and I knew that cocaine was a key factor in him coming on board. And what was his downfall? Cocaine. And what was his major downfall? Luring Sioux away to take cocaine after shows, and Budgie going ballistic when it happened one time too often. And what was his ultimate failure? Cocaine, because that's what finished him off.'

SIOUX: 'There was only one significant incident. I certainly wasn't doing cocaine after every show.'

BUDGIE: 'Paul turned up in Paris and was desperate to impress his friend who ran the place. Shortly afterwards, I wrote to him telling him that his services were no longer required.'

SEVERIN: 'He was definitely a bad influence on me as I've always been partial to a bit of a cavort. But no matter what my perceived intake, the fact remains: I'm here and Suspect is brown [bread].'

SIOUX: 'The tour had reached America and O'Reilly was back in London ostensibly looking after the office. Budgie sat down and wrote him a long letter detailing everything he was supposed to be doing while we were away, but it wasn't getting done. Equipment wasn't being booked, wages weren't being paid. It was shambolic, so we decided to get rid of him. His time with us was very limited, and so was the damage, thankfully. Onward!'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'Siouxsie and I were walking around the streets of Washington or somewhere, and she told me they were gonna get rid of Paul, and did I know anyone who could replace him. I don't think they knew where to turn. They needed someone who was sympathetic to the Banshees, but who could also control them. They're a very difficult bunch of people to keep in check. I wouldn't wanna be the person to take them all on! They certainly weren't the easiest people to work with. Siouxsie was effervescent, but she could be downright belligerent if she wanted to, though that was part of her charm. She maintained her strength throughout everything, but whether it was necessary or whether she even believed it, I don't know.

'The one night I really got to know her was when we were in New York. We'd been to the cinema, and after we'd got back to the hotel she said, "C'mon, let's get a nightcap." We went to this Irish bar, where she immediately started a fight with a bunch of guys. I helped to calm it down but we were told in no uncertain terms to leave immediately, otherwise we were both gonna get the shit kicked out of us. She's fantastic in fights, but this particular night was very hairy. We ended up getting incredibly drunk, just the two of us on this huge binge, trawling the bars until six in the morning. The next day, I threw up all over the streets of New York.'

JON KLEIN: 'Siouxsie was a cross between the lovely big sister I never had and the worst headmistress you could imagine. On *Nocturne*, she says something like, "Roses are red, violets are blue, I'm schizophrenic, and so am I". She's Gemini, and there's definitely two of her. On big drinking nights, you'd see her nod and her eyes would shut. But when they opened again, there would be someone else inside.

'I know Martin used to get scratched up. He was a real cutie-boy, a bit like a young Brett Anderson. He'd go home and have to explain to his girlfriend that no, it wasn't a groupie, it was the boss playing Voodoo Dollies.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'I think Siouxsie had a weird infatuation with me, not sexually, but she did treat me like a little doll. She used to want to dress me up, for me to be her tranny friend. But that wasn't me. We didn't share our deepest troubles. We had an almost childish relationship, a very innocent friendship that was a lot of fun. I mean, she'd go on about her "pussy" in an *Are You Being Served?* way. There was a sense of me being Mr Humphries to her Mrs Slocombe. *Carry On Banshees*? Yes, definitely!'

SIOUX: 'Martin had such an innocent, cherubic face! He looked ten years younger than he was, much to his annoyance, and that made him even more irresistible to tease about being such a pretty boy. He'd say, "Stop it! I'm not. I'm a man!"'

JON KLEIN: 'The show we took to America was amazing. I used to open it dressed in top hat and tails, a bit like a punk traffic warden. Then

Severin would pop out from behind the curtain. We had floor lights in our faces, so that we looked like two puppets facing the audience, while this noisy Glenn Branca-style feedback noise raged around us. It was getting more glam.

'We got interesting comments from the merchandising people, too. They told us that, whenever we encored with "Dear Prudence", they would sell three times as many T-shirts. We tended to play that more often than "Israel" or "Spellbound". Fuck art, let's sell some shirts!'

4 November 1988
The tour nears its climax with the first of two shows at the Universal Amphitheatre, Los Angeles.

Sioux: 'I was really enjoying working with Jon and Martin. It was a tough tour but the shows were going great. It really felt like we were a proper band. We were getting knackered but we felt good. Then we found out that Severin's girlfriend, Lucy, was coming out to join him. Uh-oh. I thought it was important for the band to bond, to do stuff together on days off, to consolidate. After she arrived, we didn't see him except for at the show. Their relationship was a loose cannon, too, which didn't help matters.'

Martin McCarrick: 'It had been a massive road trip around America, absolutely nightmarish. We'd leave a venue, jump in a car, drive four hours to a hotel, sleep a bit, get up and drive off again – night after night for weeks. It was mental. We were all drinking a lot, too, and that didn't help either.'

Sioux: 'The LA shows at the Universal Amphitheatre were two of our biggest on the tour, and the first one started off by us having to wait while Severin and Lucy took half an hour to come out of the hotel to join us. I was furious but I didn't want to say anything in front of everyone because I didn't want to create a bad vibe. The show was great, we headed back to the hotel and I was invited back to their room for drinks.

'Out of the blue, Lucy asked me if I liked her being around. I was honest and said that I didn't particularly, and I was about to say that the timing was bad when, before I finished, she screamed, "You prima donna bitch!" She was out of control, so I picked her up, threw her out of the room, then I began to strangle Severin with the cord of the telephone saying, "Why have you done this?" This meant we had to finish the tour, which ran until December, with a horrible vibe in the air and no apologies. I was furious at him.

'After all the shit we'd been through, I thought, "This is it." He maintained that I was being unreasonable, but I simply couldn't be around him. For him to fuck up like that really affected our friendship. I thought, "How can I continue working with this man?" It was a real letdown. Maybe I overreacted. I don't know.'

BUDGIE: 'That was the first real major bust-up. It had been the second major tour of the US I'd done sober and, again, I felt I was looking in on a real crazy world. It was a weird and lonely position to be in. I felt as if I was doing it for the band, thinking I could heal things, but it was doomed to failure. Because I'd changed, I expected everything else to change too, but they simply continued as normal. I really thought it was going to be the end of the band.'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'Theoretically, Paul O'Reilly was still on board, but it was me who was flown out to talk Siouxsie into not splitting the band up. She'd really had enough. It was an accumulation of everything – the legacy of Dave Woods, the business side being such a fucking shambles, Paul O'Reilly being a total nightmare. The crap took up so much of their time, and it was affecting her voice, too. None of that was doing her any good at all.

'We ended up in her room with me telling her why I didn't think they should split. To be honest, I don't think it would have been a particularly bad thing if they had called it a day at that point, because everything was so fucked. It was a crisis that would happen every so often, more so during the final few years. She'd ask, "Am I being honest with myself? Do I really want to do this?" I'd say, "You're fucking great at what you do." I convinced her on this occasion, because they did carry on – just. It was an odd situation, though: me, this dead-keen fan who ends up being nominated as the peacemaker.'

BUDGIE: 'When I wrote that letter to Paul O'Reilly, basically telling him to keep away from the band, it was the first time I'd done anything like that in my life. It was a welcome moment of lucidity. And when we were in San Francisco, I asked Tim [Collins] if he'd like to become our manager. He, too, was sober at the time.'

TIM COLLINS (manager): 'On the way back from the States, the band were seated in two rows on the plane having a meeting. It was about O'Reilly. By the end of the meeting, he was fired and I was to be the replacement.'

SEVERIN: 'I heard that, after he left us, O'Reilly's next job was tour manager for Sigue Sigue Sputnik. He took them to Brazil, and as he got off the plane he fell down the stairs and broke his ankle. Apparently, he spent the rest of the tour in a cast snorting the earnings up his nose.'

SIOUX: 'We didn't hear anything of him apart from whispers that he was going down the slippery slope. A few years later, someone told us what had happened. On New Year's Eve 1990, he'd sat by the Thames, drunk himself stupid, OD'd on coke and God knows what else, and was found washed up by the side of the river the next morning. It was suicide. Part of me was shocked, but part of me had always thought that it was exactly how he would end up. He was only 26 or so when he died.'

SEVERIN: 'So, with our first three managers, the score was heroin two, cocaine one. Happily, we then had a long, fruitful, honest and decent relationship with Tim Collins. It had taken us 12 years to find a good manager and he was around for the next seven. And he was easily the best. Siouxsie probably thought he wasn't quite that all-important extra band member because he was more standoffish and critical. But he was also a realist. He wouldn't come backstage and massage everybody by saying everything was great. He was hard on us and that was good. But the bottom line was that he was deadly honest; he didn't steal from us. I'd rather go with less of the bedside manner but more integrity.'

BUDGIE: 'Tim took a tight hold of the cheque book, and he deserves all the credit for keeping everything afloat for as long as it stayed that way.'

TIM COLLINS: 'I didn't realise how bad the administrative side was and I don't think the band had much of a clue either. Both the tax and VAT were in a terrible state. Accounts hadn't been filed for several years. They had no idea whether tours had been profitable or not. They didn't even have a typewriter. I sacked the accountant and the lawyer and renegotiated the record deal. I also put a stop to the dozens of parking tickets we'd be incurring as a result of Captain Scarlet living out of the band's van.

'Unfortunately, as soon as I got the job, the band started to implode. I wasn't really aware of the strains during the *Peepshow* tour, though I was surprised at the occasional ferocity of the arguments. I was put in a position of having to broker the situation, and in some respects I wanted to keep it together to avoid the embarrassment of jumping from tour management into management, then have the band split.'

BUDGIE: 'I don't think we ever really recovered from that incident in Los Angeles. *Peepshow* had been our most successful album, we'd taken this huge stage production to America, and we should have built on it. Severin still can't see why we didn't, or why Siouxsie and I ended up going off to Spain and doing *Boomerang* when we should have been doing another Banshees album. But I don't think Siouxsie could have stood being in a room with him at that point. As they couldn't sort it out, we had to take another option.'

SIOUX: 'Severin had taken an interest in the business side, out of necessity more than anything else, but that meant we no longer had time for the spontaneity we used to have of writing songs together. He was probably right in choosing to take care of business, but did take its toll on the reason we were doing what we were doing in the first place, which was being in a band and making music.'

BUDGIE: 'I'd always felt that Steven secretly couldn't accept that Siouxsie, as the singer, was always the star. Even when I first saw the Banshees back in 1977, it was clear that there was this compelling woman out front with the rest of them looking like ants behind her. I'm sure that, beyond the band, that's how everyone else saw it, too.'

MARC ALMOND: 'Severin must have felt isolated after the relationship between Siouxsie and Budgie developed. I once witnessed a terrible row between the three of them at Mike Hedges' house, and I was very shocked and surprised at the tension there was between them. It was so unpleasant. I remember feeling that I shouldn't really be listening to it.

'I think that Severin worshipped the ground Siouxsie walked on. He once told me that she was the greatest star that ever lived, that she was like a latter-day Marlene Dietrich. I couldn't argue with him because she really is this iconic figure. But it can't have been easy finding himself slightly frozen out, and the renewed Creatures activity must have added to the tension.'

SIOUX: 'Severin will never admit to it, but I think there was some resentment towards Budgie. They get on better now. Budgie did have a drink problem, but that wasn't the root of it. Severin had some issues with the fact that me and Budgie were sexually attracted, and I think that The Creatures were perceived as a threat to the equilibrium of the band, too. But there were other factors involved. I felt Severin was pulling away from me, and I know that the jealousy worked both ways, because Budgie could be jealous of Severin as well. Sometimes I'd dream of what it would be like to have a partner who wasn't in the band and not have any of these problems.'

JON KLEIN: 'Siouxsie and Budgie were getting fit and healthy. They were no longer the party animals I'd known years earlier, but Steve still was. He went out every night for 10, maybe 15 years, and no matter how long he stayed up he'd be the first up next morning. But you'd know not to say a word to him before he'd had his cup of coffee, otherwise you'd get this Donald Sutherland scowl back!'

SEVERIN: 'What I found most annoying about that whole period was that we were actually playing really well. Looking back, it's such a shame that we only did something like 40 shows with the *Peepshow* tour – we should have done triple that. It was so well put together, almost like a musical, and we could have taken it around America several times. But, now that Siouxsie and I had fallen out, it felt like we'd shot ourselves in the foot yet again. The resentment just wasn't subsiding and she said that she couldn't envisage us ever working together again as the Banshees. It had got that bad.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'We'd come back from America and had a meeting in the office one day and that was when Budgie opened a can of worms. He basically said, "This is what's going on, and we've decided to call it a day for the foreseeable future." We all moved off in different directions, and I didn't think we'd ever do anything else together again. Siouxsie and Budgie were recording in Spain with Mike Hedges and planning to go on tour as The Creatures. And Severin and I pooled our studio equipment and began writing material for some vague project. Maybe his connection with me was Steven's way of maintaining his hope of one day getting the band back together.'

SIOUX: 'Budgie and I drove down to Spain where we stayed in several of these grand paradors, ending up in Jerez de la Frontera in Andalucia. We checked into this amazing building, an estate really, with its own vineyard and chapel. Mike Hedges came down and we recorded there during May and June 1989. The place was run by this ex-bullfighter, who'd decorated the walls with old photos of 'kills' and animal heads. My sport was to bait him. I'd goad him by saying things like, "Your bullfighter outfit makes you look like a ballet dancer", and "Como maricon" (like a gay man), which of course offended his macho nature. I loved to watch him thrash around like Rumpelstiltskin, getting redder and redder in the face!'

'He even managed to make Budgie lose his temper, which was something I'd never seen happen before. There was some confusion over the bill, which was being paid by Polydor, and just as the maid Rosa had cooked this dish of merluza fish and potato chick peas, he came in shouted, "No Food!" and said we couldn't leave until the bill had been paid. Very little gets between Budgie and his food, and he told the owner to fuck off and leave us alone. Budgie stood up for himself. He was learning...'

MARC ALMOND: 'I wasn't that surprised Siouxsie and Budgie recorded *Boomerang* in the south of Spain. Elements of the Banshees' music always had that Spanish feel – the chord structures, even Siouxsie's voice has a flamenco flavour to it. That whole thing about it being a culture of cruelty and of beauty, the bullfights and the religious iconography, influenced both of us. It was passionate and colourful, and there's a dark side to it.'

BUDGIE: 'When we started working again as The Creatures, we'd get the occasional whisper in the ear suggesting that we should simply continue on those lines, but we never really entertained the idea. We didn't even intend to tour, but there was a shout from Geffen that pre-sales of *Boomerang* had been good on the back of *Peepshow*. That obviously created a little additional conflict.'

SEVERIN: 'Siouxsie recently told me that she and Budgie had been asked a few times to do The Creatures under the name Siouxsie And The Banshees and she'd always refused – probably because she knew I'd sue her! But I was impressed by her loyalty, even when we were going through our traumas.'

9 'We'd Fought The Punk Wars For Those Bands, But There Was No Way The Banshees Could Sanitise What They Were Doing'

– Steven Severin

SIOUX: 'We'd spent the best part of a year away from each other, and doing The Creatures album had given me an excuse not to think about the Banshees. I'd begun to equate the group with a monster and I didn't want to have to deal with that. The Creatures allowed me to immerse myself in something that wasn't complicated by dealing with four other ego requirements. I could blow away the cobwebs and concentrate on doing something fulfilling.'

SEVERIN: 'We've never been particularly good at being honest with each other, though a lot of that was because of the frenetic pace we'd always work at. There was never time to stop and think about how we were feeling, and the resentment simply built up. The previous few years had seen one catastrophe after another and we'd spent a lot of our time dealing with each new disaster without realising that this was taking its toll on all of us. Things going wrong had been so much a part of our existence that we pretended nothing could faze us. Perhaps we were conning ourselves.'

SIOUX: 'After the fight in LA when everything came to a head, it took a long time for Severin and I to get things back to how they'd been earlier in our career. In hindsight, we probably should have stopped the band, because it really had reached breaking point. Against our better judgement, and because deep down I still had faith in what the Banshees were supposed to have been about in the first place, we decided to get back together in 1990 to record a new album.'

BUDGIE: 'In typical Banshees style, nothing was discussed. We simply booked a residential rehearsal studio, Bluestone in rural Wales, and that's where we met up. Siouxsie and Steven had an emotional "Wasn't it silly, we've all moved on now" reunion and peace was restored. Deep down, I knew the damage had been done. By doing The Creatures record, and then touring it, Siouxsie and I realised that a lot of fun could be had by doing things differently.

'We'd toured the UK, Europe and then the States between February and April 1990, and I'd put my sobriety and newly learned motoring skills to use by driving overnight from show to show. Back in London, as we readied ourselves for the forthcoming Banshees rehearsals, I had trouble adapting to this "other life". One night in May, I ended up at Steve Strange's new club, The Birdcage in Earls Court, and slipped up on booze and cocaine. I nearly lost my mind and, so I thought at the time, Siouxsie as well. I took a train to Newquay thinking, albeit not very clearly, that if I could turn back the clock to a pre-*Tubular Bells* era everything would be OK again. That escape into the past didn't help, but fortunately things did eventually get back on track.'

SIOUX: 'The rehearsal studio was in this Welsh valley where the cloud never cleared, and the entire album was literally written underneath a huge damp cloud. We were only there two or three weeks, but it felt like two or three years. It was the first time Severin and I had been in a room together in over a year, but we didn't talk about what had happened. We just drank loads. We were never great at dealing with emotional things.'

BUDGIE: 'I found the sessions difficult. Steven had got more heavily into computers since we'd last worked together. In the past, he'd put his ideas down on a Portastudio and the band would interpret the drum machines. Now, the drum machines were staying! I'd set my kit up, but no other instruments were unpacked at all, apart from Steven on his computer. I said, "When are we gonna start playing?" but we never did. There was just this loop constantly going around. That eventually became "Kiss Them For Me".

'Nothing really happened until [producer] Stephen Hague came along. And even then, it was simply a case of Severin downloading his parts into Hague's computer and building the material up from there. I thought, "What am I doing here?" I'd just done a tour that had relied on sequencing, and I was looking forward to playing with people again.'

SEVERIN: 'I liked Stephen Hague immediately. We'd been out to LA to meet him and he told me that when he was younger he'd been a fan of Henry Miller and had gone to work for him in Big Sur. This real pop producer had this darker side to him and that interested me.'

JON KLEIN: 'The first time we met Stephen Hague was when we'd moved to this rehearsal place in Sussex. A duck had walked in, so Martin fed him a few peanuts and a dash of vodka. It then went straight up to the producer and dumped. What a start! I did enjoy those sessions, though.'

SEVERIN: 'We were all in different parts of this big Tudor house, and as Jon was the new boy we put him up in a room in the eaves. One morning, I heard him come thundering down the stairs and pointing at his mouth. The previous night, he'd fallen asleep with a soft drink by his bed, and a wasp had climbed into it during the night.'

JON KLEIN: 'I'd woken up with a major hangover, so I took a sip from a can of 7-Up. My first thought was that a cigarette had burned the back of my throat, not realising that it would have been extinguished by the liquid. When I saw the wasp, I screamed.'

SEVERIN: 'The rest of us thought this was hilarious, but after about 20 minutes it was obvious that the poor bloke was in pain. We had to drive him to the nearest hospital for a semi-tracheotomy or something.'

SIOUX: 'Jon was so accident-prone. While he was there, he also got his toe stuck in the bath tap, and he spent most of the time with a plaster stuck on his forehead because he kept hitting his head on the eaves in the attic room. He was always entertaining. If he'd sit down on a table next to you, your first inclination was to hold on tight to your drink. He was a clumsy, Jacques Tati-like figure.'

SEVERIN: 'I loved going in when we started recording the album at RAK, but Siouxsie and Budgie hated it. It was the first time we'd used that studio since *The Scream* and the experience was completely different. We hardly saw each other because we were all working in different rooms. I remember Jon Klein and Budgie going off together and taking six weeks to work out "Silver Waterfalls". The whole process was very disjointed.'

BUDGIE: 'I'd written "Silver Waterfalls" on the *Peepshow* tour. We had this little broom cupboard under the stairs with a cassette deck. Next door was thousands of pounds worth of equipment and a live studio not being utilised properly. It seemed a terrible waste.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'Severin and I had been working with loops and samplers for a while. That was part of the reason for choosing Stephen Hague, who'd previously worked with Pet Shop Boys and New Order and had a track record with new technology. Yet recording *Superstition* was such an alienating experience. Hague was the first person I'd worked with who sat constantly at a computer playing with his mouse. We'd record guitar parts and stuff but you'd never hear them back. I also found it frustrating that he'd correct things on screen when I was more interested in getting a performance out of the keyboard or the cello. He did an awful lot of manipulating with his box of tricks. He virtually took total control.'

May 1991
'Kiss Them For Me'.

SEVERIN: 'It's the one song that's totally dominated by Stephen Hague's aesthetic and it's an aesthetic I really liked. I loved the idea of us going into a studio and crafting a song in the way that The Beach Boys used to craft material. With Hedges it was a case of throwing things against the wall until something happened. Hague was the complete opposite. It was all about honing and honing until you had something great. I still think "Kiss Them For Me" is one of the best things we ever did.

'It's unfathomable that a song as great as that, that transcends any fad, gets to No.31 in the UK and No.10 in America. Something's wrong there. I thought it was such a classy single, it'll go Top 10 no matter what's happening at the moment – not because we still had this huge underground following, but because it was a great record.'

SIOUX: 'It was a great single but I hated the process. It was like being in a laboratory. It felt like it was being mixed under a microscope and put together with tweezers. I want big movements, faders going up and down, a hands-on process. The producer did something unforgivable during the making of that song – he made me doubt my voice, and made it virtually impossible to sing it live. It was in the wrong key. He transposed it up and out of my natural range – stupid twat.'

Billy Chainsaw: 'It was a difficult song to play live because of the way Stephen Hague put the album together. Siouxsie had to hit so many notes that weren't natural to her because he'd sampled bits of her voice and put them all over the place. It sounded like Larry The Fucking Lamb.'

Sioux: 'I don't know any singer who doesn't have a battle on tour. It's an assault course that only another singer can relate to. In the past we'd played too many shows, up to five or six back to back, and with crap monitors. That's something that's now consigned to the dark ages. The voice is the most intimate and empowering instrument, but when it goes wrong the distress is intolerable. People don't understand the way they would, say, if a guitarist turned up with a bandaged hand. I still remember those times before a show when I'd be wanting to tear my throat out. I used to pray for a bionic throat! I hated having to become hypersensitive about air conditioning and heating. It drove me mad; it just wasn't me. I don't suffer that ignorance anymore.'

Severin: 'While we were recording, we'd hung out with Pop Will Eat Itself, whose singer Clint [Mansell] turned out to be a huge Banshees fan. That happened a lot when we met younger bands.'

25 May 1991
Siouxsie and Budgie marry at St John's Church in Notting Hill, London.

Budgie: 'There's an entry in my diary from 1985 that states: "(P.POSAL!!) (YES) (Shh …)". I'd obviously popped the question and got a positive response years ago, but the Berlin incident, with me passing out in the gutter, Siouxsie slicing her foot and both of us ending up in hospital obviously put any plans on ice. Then we toured, and Siouxsie dislocated her knee, so any thoughts there'd been of marriage had been forgotten about.

'When we announced that we were engaged, in the control room at RAK, Siouxsie and I were almost as shocked as everyone else. We couldn't believe we were saying it. It was Valentine's Day 1991, and I'd bought her an antique ring from Kensington Market, which was rather out of character. It had obviously all gone romantic for a moment! I know we were in the middle of recording *Superstition,* which we weren't enjoying very much, so it seemed like a way of getting something that we really wanted, another life, maybe.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'Out of the blue, Budgie announced that they were engaged – everyone went really quiet at first, then Stephen Hague said, "Are you serious?" They were, and we had champagne to prove it. I'd always imagined that Siouxsie would have scoffed at the idea of getting married to anyone: '"I'm not getting married to a bloke!" But it's always good to surprise people.'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'I wasn't surprised at all, and I was honoured to be one of the ushers. Unfortunately, I missed out on the photographs because I had to jump into a cab and get over to the Bombay Brasserie in Fulham to make sure there was no one around. Of course, there were a couple of paparazzi there, but by the time the wedding party arrived no one was really bothered about them.'

BUDGIE: 'We had the wedding day that we wanted and it all went to plan. It was beautiful. We dressed up in our Indian prince and princess costumes, had the ceremony and a meal afterwards, and then headed off to Paris. Three days later, we were back filming "Kiss Them For Me" for *Top Of The Pops.*'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'They're like yin and yang. Their relationship allows Siouxsie to explore her masculine side and Budgie to indulge his feminine side. She has strong masculine traits, Budgie has strong feminine traits, and I don't mean that on a strictly sexual level. But the contrast is important in understanding why they've stayed together so long.'

JON KLEIN: 'At the heart of the band you've got a woman, the boyfriend she started the band with, and the other bloke she's just married. It couldn't have been better planned! Budgie always had this aura about him, and that's why I was shocked when he first opened his gob. This mysterious character with the bleached, lion-like hair and the memorable name who cheerily says, "Awright, lad?" He's very much the natural musician who can pick up anything and make it sound musical. Severin is the band's official non-musician, the one with the vision who's written some of the classic basslines of all time. He'll intellectualise things into music. Those differences were certainly an underlying source of tension.'

Sioux: 'It became obvious during the making of *Superstition* that we hadn't addressed the deeper problems, because we were probably all still smarting from the welts caused by what had gone before. It's only years later that you get any kind of clarity about a situation like that. At the time I thought that Tim [Collins] was good for us, and that meant we'd be able to focus our concentration on making a new album together. However, Tim became so close to Steven that I began to feel as if I was in Steven And The Banshees.'

Tim Collins: 'Siouxsie's opinion carried most weight, but she was guilty of snap decisions. She's a bugger in meetings. Her mind goes all over the place and you can spend ages guiding the conversation back to where it should be. We wasted so much time that I started to circulate lengthy memos so that we could concentrate on what needed focusing on. It was a benign dictatorship, though. Sioux would have a strong view, Severin would come up with an alternate take, and Budgie smoothed the furrows with an obtuse comment. On a ten-point list, you knew you'd done well if you'd dealt with half of them.'

Martin McCarrick: 'I'd been a fan, seen their shows, then joined them yet I could always see the Banshees from an outsider's point of view. They'd always been on the inside and that's a strange place to be. You don't have a sense of perspective if you're too close. They had their differences, but they'd all get incredibly angry if they got a bad review. They were so in love with the idea of the Banshees. No matter how much I loved the group, I could never be in love with it as much as Siouxsie and Severin. It had been their lives since they were 18 or so. That's a massive part of your life, and that's why they found it so upsetting when other people made judgements about them.'

June 1991
Superstition.

SIOUX: 'Only two songs, "Softly" and "Drifter", had any spontaneity to them. As far as I'm concerned, our strength has always come from building songs while playing together, rather than writing them on computers. The whole process was soul-destroying. It was all too clean for me. I was much more encouraged by the B-sides that we did at the time without Hague – "Return", "Staring Back" and "Spiral Twist".'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'It was a nice-sounding Banshees album. I thought the songs were good, especially "Little Sister" and "The Ghost In You" – they revealed the group's gentler side. I loved it when things became melodic and swoony, when Siouxsie would almost croon the vocals. That was amazing, totally different. There were a few songs we did when I felt, "I've heard this before," but I wouldn't necessarily say so! You had to be a bit careful, though I usually said what I thought. The worst times in the studio were when they switched into "old Banshees" mode, because that was something they knew and I didn't particularly.'

SEVERIN: 'I think about a third of *Superstition* is fucking brilliant, but any positive thoughts are tainted because I know how much Siouxsie and Budgie hated making the record. That makes it hard to be objective about it, but I still think of it as a romantic album in many ways.'

TIM COLLINS: 'Having made the record, they had to pull together and promote it. When I took the Banshees on I knew they'd made two mistakes. They'd never play big venues other than the Royal Albert Hall, which is a ridiculous expense and with sound problems. And they'd never properly worked America.'

SEVERIN: 'We did tour there a lot during the early '90s but it wasn't a deliberate dismissal of Britain. We saw America as a new horizon, one that we should have worked much earlier in our career, but because of one departure after another, we came at it late. When we were asked to do Lollapalooza, we thought, "Do we want to talk to *Smash Hits* about our latest single, bearing in mind magazines like that had no understanding of the band's history, or shall we go to America where we were being fêted as legends?"'

18 July 1991
After a short series of British dates climaxing in three nights at the Town and Country Club, the Banshees play the first night of the six-week *Lollapalooza* tour at the Compton Theatre in Phoenix, Arizona. The brainchild of Jane's Addiction's Perry Farrell, this travelling 'alternative rock' festival also features Nine Inch Nails, Ice-T with Body Count, Living Colour, The Butthole Surfers and Henry Rollins.

DAVE NAVARRO (guitarist, Jane's Addiction): 'I suggested that we get the Banshees for the tour. Perry [Farrell] and I were both big fans. During the late 1980s, there had been an underground goth/post-punk-rock scene in LA, and I'd first heard them in goth clubs. I was captivated and haunted by Siouxsie's voice and, as soon as I heard it, I had to find out who it was. I did, and I went out and bought all the records I could find. I became a Banshee-head. I didn't know what she looked like but I already wanted to have sex with her! Then you see her, and you're like, "I'm sure I wanna have sex with her!" Did it happen? Who knows ...'

SIOUX: 'During the first week of the tour, Dave Navarro presented me with a white Vox Teardrop guitar as a show of appreciation to the band. I was overcome, especially when I noticed how beautiful he was! We clicked immediately. I remember having some interesting chats with him about Klimt. The guitar was beautiful and a perfect companion for the blue one that I'd written those *Kaleidoscope* songs on.'

DAVE NAVARRO: 'I thought it would be a friendship offering, something to welcome her to the tour. Siouxsie was the first person I truly respected as an artist who didn't disappoint me when we met. She was everything I'd hoped for and more. All those guys are amazing players, and I love what they did, but that girl could sing over nails on a blackboard and I'd still love it. That's the bottom line.

'The idea was to bring a rainbow of sonics to the tour and the Banshees filled in a lot of the missing pieces. They played right before us, and I thought Jane's Addiction and the Banshees was a perfect marriage. There are so many similar threads – melody, use of sound, attitude, sex appeal – yet we came from different musical places. I always saw Jane's Addiction as the masculine Siouxsie And The Banshees.'

SEVERIN: 'I was surprised that no one had come up with the Lollapalooza idea before. Nowadays, it doesn't seem that extraordinary because it's become entrenched in American rock culture, but at the time people were terrified it was going to be a huge failure. Perry was smart, though. He knew there was a massive audience for that kind of music. This was just prior to grunge, at the very moment that "alternative" music was being perceived as a viable genre, so his timing was perfect.'

SIOUX: 'I like things when you don't know what's gonna happen. The idea seemed to hark back to the late '60s festivals, where you'd have Jimi Hendrix, Leonard Cohen and The Who all on the same bill and yet there'd be a sense of unity in that diversity. It was unpredictable, a one-off and a very punk-rock "fingers up" to those who thought it was bound to fail.'

DAVE NAVARRO: 'It was a pivotal time in the States for alternative rock. It might have marked its launch and at the same time its demise.'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'Lollapalooza totally energised the band. It was perfect timing because "Kiss Them For Me" had only been a minor hit in Britain, yet it had become their biggest American hit. The tour coincided with that perfectly. Lollapalooza was the best thing I'd been on in my life.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'It was a movable festival and nothing like that had ever happened before. It was insane. There was a huge entourage of people on board, so it took a couple of weeks to work out who was who. No one knew if any of the bands would get on, but it soon became this big travelling party. The Butthole Surfers made sure of that.'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'Murray Mitchell, a guitar tech who used to work for the Banshees, later told me that, when the tour started, the band had nothing to do with the other acts. They were the token Brits who were seen as prima donnas, and the Buttholes thought they were a bunch of pricks. [Singer] Gibby Haynes told him that the Buttholes had planned to have a ruck with them. The first day I joined the Lollapalooza tour, I met up with [their drummer] King Coffee. I was a massive fan, so we started talking. He went back into the Buttholes' dressing room, and says, "There's nothing this Banshees guy doesn't know about us." The ruck never happened.'

BUDGIE: 'The Buttholes would come into our dressing room and Gibby would say, "These guys have got butter!", thinking it was some kinky thing. "And dressing gowns, too." We'd go to their room and there'd be this Formica table heaving under the weight of shitloads of beer, a TV and gambling paraphernalia.'

SEVERIN: 'The reason we got on so well with them was because they'd also been going for quite a while and were fairly cynical about it all. They were probably doing it for the money, because you're not likely to agree to play at noon every day for a month unless you're getting paid pretty well.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'Behind the scenes, there was Perry Farrell's drug addiction, Henry Rollins' utter despisal of anyone who did drugs, dyed their hair or wore nail varnish. Ice-T and Body Count had this absolutely terrifying posse that moved around with them. There was quite a bit of body piercing going on, too. It was a freak show that soon descended into insane partying.'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'Mr Misery Rollins was the only person who didn't join in, which pissed us off. We went to see him do this spoken-word thing, and he knew we were in the audience, so he steamed into this whole thing about goths, for want of a better word, and how sad and useless they were.'

SIOUX: 'It didn't upset me at all. I agreed with him; I hate uniformity. I would have preferred seeing him do his spoken-word material on Lollapalooza than the set he was playing. I did think his GI Joe chic that he took to such hilarious extremes could have done with the same scrutiny he reserved for others.'

BUDGIE: 'Rollins would emerge in the early hours of the morning with what appeared to be his own cross on his back and start doing press-ups. He had the weight of the world on his shoulders, he had his particular brand of coffee bean which he'd grind with his teeth, pour boiling water down his throat to percolate it ...'

SIOUX: 'Nine Inch Nails had this reputation in America for being really shocking, but when we saw them it was more like pantomime, all carefully scripted. Compared with the very real violence we'd experienced in the past at our own gigs, their show seemed so fake. That was a shame because I loved *Pretty Hate Machine*.'

BUDGIE: 'They used to smash their guitars up on stage, but each day before the show they'd go out and buy cheap ones to abuse. When they were about to leave the tour, the crew from the other bands secretly swapped the guitars so they ended up smashing the expensive ones by mistake. Nine Inch Nails were wondering why it was taking so long as they were blithely destroying thousands of dollars' worth of their own equipment.'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'That tour was Trent's break-out, I suppose, but it was the end of Jane's Addiction. Dave was so fucked up on drugs that I couldn't get any sense out of him.'

BUDGIE: 'Perry Farrell actually died a couple of times on the tour. He overdosed, turned blue and was declared dead, then he came back to life. It became something of a challenge for people booking the shows because they were never entirely certain whether the headline band would be alive the next day.'

BUDGIE: 'Jane's Addiction's bass player, Eric [Avery], used to carry his plane ticket home with him wherever he went. He'd clutch it to his chest every night, the only sober person in a world of debauchery, saying that he'd give it one more show and that would be it. He kept saying that throughout the tour.'

SEVERIN: 'You were in a totally unique atmosphere going from one fantastic hotel to another and, in between, playing to 30,000 kids who all looked the same and went totally bonkers. It's very easy to get sucked into that existence, but fortunately we were old enough and wise enough not to get too caught up in it all.'

BUDGIE: 'Sometimes the repetitiveness of it all did get boring. I had this beige suit that I thought made me look like Albert Finney in *Under The Volcano,* and one day I went off for a saunter in it. I ended up in the nearest bar and it was packed with bands and crew from the tour, all equally bored. I sat there, got gloriously plastered, then sauntered back to the hotel where the rest of the band made me go to bed immediately, like a naughty schoolboy.'

SIOUX: 'We'd forever be sending him to bed on those later American tours. One time in Miami, he was pissed again, so we got the minder to take him to his room. The two of them disappeared in the lift but a few minutes later Budgie came back down again on his own having given the minder the slip. We sent him back off to bed, but moments later he was there again in the bar, like one of those ever-returning toys. Every time we sent him away, he'd find some way of getting back, sneaking down a fire escape or something. It was relentless.'

JON KLEIN: 'One night in Chicago, Budgie and I had eaten out, drunk loads of bottles of wine then went back to the hotel bar where he started ordering double Jack Daniel's. We met this bloke who looked like William Burroughs, and he took us into the Irish quarter. We found a bar, but as soon as we'd ordered our drinks they started kicking us out. They were big fuckers, too, 15-stone guys and about five of them had me on the floor and were really fucking hurting me. The bar manager was strangling me, so I bit him.'

BUDGIE: 'The police arrived and we were convinced that we were going to receive a beating because the Chicago police were notorious for their brutality. They bundled us into a paddywagon, and handcuffed behind our backs, but that didn't stop us managing to extract cigarettes and a lighter from each other's pockets. When the police opened the doors to take us in, we were sitting there smoking nonchalantly with blood pouring from our fingers. You don't expect to go out for a drink and end up in jail with a lawsuit hanging over you.'

JON KLEIN: 'It got really ugly. They dug out all my old Specimen records to prove that I was a degenerate, had probably done heroin and so was an AIDS risk. Eventually it blew over, and so did the threat of a jail sentence.

'It wasn't always me getting into trouble. Martin went missing in the American Midwest during that tour. We were on this sleeper bus, completely knackered, and were told to get off because it was the last truck stop till tomorrow. We all crawled back onto the bus, and after we'd driven on about 15 miles or so, Vivian, the security guy, suddenly put his head in his hands. He just realised that we'd driven off, leaving this cute young Englishman totally penniless and in his pyjamas right in the heart of redneck country. When we finally managed to make a turn and go back and get him, he was desperate – but still in one piece!'

SEVERIN: 'Henry Rollins was dreadful, too. The last thing you want to hear at 10:30 in the morning is this muscle-bound American shouting at you from the stage. Jane's Addiction could be rubbish, but they could also be brilliant, certainly never anything between. It depended what mood they were in or how smacked out they were.'

JON KLEIN: 'The best gig moment was in Denver, Colorado, when we were playing "Helter Skelter". The altitude is high there, so you're already out of it even without drugs or medication. Halfway through the song, this apparition suddenly appears from the wings and it's Gibby Haynes – six and a half feet tall and dressed like a transvestite. He starts stripping, and when he gets down to his knickers, he whips out this massive erection with a Dr Pepper can taped to his knob!'

SEVERIN: 'He looked like Norman Bates' mum with a shotgun. And he did absolutely nothing except, of course, let off the shotgun. It was hilarious to see him behaving like that in front of 30,000 people.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'Gibby often ended up joining us for the encore. He'd become completely infatuated with Siouxsie. He wanted to sleep with her more than anything in the world. I think he was out of luck, though they got on brilliantly. She treated him terribly, and he loved that too. There was a submissive element in Gibby's make-up.'

SIOUX: 'We had a laugh with Gibby. He inspired me to do something I hadn't done since I was 15 – smoke some pot with him. The only time I'd had it before I threw up. I couldn't help invading his stage one night, too. I smashed him over the head with this Jack Daniel's prop bottle, kicked him and ran back off, all in the name of a little bogus friction.'

DAVE NAVARRO: 'I'd come on towards the end of the Banshees' set and join them for a cover of [The Velvet Underground's] "All Tomorrow's Parties", and that was better than any sex. I still regard that as one of the highlights of my career. We had a lot of fun off stage, too. There were a couple of evenings where I taught Jon and Steven to make out with me, you know, kissing with tongues. I tried to establish a sexual relationship with the whole band – and I have the pictures to prove it. Steven is the first Englishman whose tongue has ended up in my mouth.'

SEVERIN: 'I don't remember that at all! I would admit it in a blink of an eye if I could remember it. He could be getting his blonds mixed up.'

BUDGIE: 'That was Dave and their bass player Eric. It was their way of shocking visiting English bands. Martin and I thought, "We can do that," so we did.'

JON KLEIN: 'Budgie had another admirer. Talvin Singh, who'd played tablas on a couple of tracks on *Superstition*, came out with us and he was hugely impressed by Budgie's dress sense. He'd refer to him as "Executive Rock Star", sit in the hotel lobby, and get all excited as he waited for Budgie to descend the stairs dressed in, perhaps, a pressed cream suit and a Panama hat. He soon put together his own Executive Rock Star wardrobe.'

BUDGIE: 'We got into the English Gentleman look fused with the Dadaist look of Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray. It was anything but black, really – brown brogues, cream suits. Talvin and I probably thought it was cool, but it was bloody awful, really.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'We must have done 30 or more shows in as many states, and as the tour progressed, we stayed up later and later, sometimes for days on end. It began to take over. I loved it so much, but I remember the last night and being so glad that I was going home. I'm not sure how much longer anyone could have taken it. It was getting to the point you thought that someone was gonna die.'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'Lollapalooza was the greatest experience of my 16 years with the Banshees. They were regarded as the Elder Statesmen on the tour, but never as the Old Bastards. Half the people playing on stage had grown up with them, been inspired by them.'

JON KLEIN: 'It was the biggest tour that year in America after Guns N' Roses. Every time I switched on MTV, "Kiss Them For Me" was on, and there were rumours that we were gonna work on the new *Batman* movie. It was the year that things really looked like stepping up. Then Seattle happened, and that blew it for us, and for The Cure and Depeche Mode.'

SIOUX: 'After Lollapalooza, we toured Europe throughout October, and stayed in these wonderful hotels. In Nice, we were in a gorgeous old place on the promenade where the foyer had a glass dome and you weren't allowed to smoke or talk loudly underneath it. When we played Slovenia we got a riverboat to Venice after the gig. The pursuit of luxury for its own sake has never been a driving force behind what we've done, but it was nice for once to feel like we were masters of our own destiny. We'd begun to do that in America, staying near places like the Hoover Dam or Death Valley or the Grand Canyon, but this was the first time we'd done it in Europe.'

SEVERIN: 'I enjoyed touring then because the band had got so good and we'd finally got a chance to look around the places we were playing. You'd have to be stupid not to enjoy that. We could pick and choose where we stayed, so I used to sit down with our tour manager Curly Jobson and we'd go through this book, *The Leading Hotels Of The World*, cherry picking our accommodation. We'd made a lot of money from Lollapalooza, so we could afford to splash out a bit. If we were going to spend a month in Europe, then why not create as luxurious an environment as possible for ourselves?'

20 November
Return to America to promote *Superstition*.

SEVERIN: 'The idea was to play the secondary markets, all the places we hadn't covered on Lollapalooza. Then we'd do America again at the beginning of 1992. It seemed like a fairly incessant touring schedule, but Tim Collins realised that the only way to keep us together was for us to be constantly working. He knew that if we had two weeks apart, Siouxsie and Budgie would be off doing The Creatures, and that would be that for the next year. It was important to keep the impetus going.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'I remember it being more difficult when we returned in early 1992. The theatre sizes had gone up a bit, because of greedy promoters, and we'd reached saturation point. People don't want to see you twice in three months.'

SEVERIN: 'It would have been a lot easier to have survived if we'd been that one level higher. I certainly felt that our material and professionalism was beyond that of bands like U2 and REM, but there was one major difference: Siouxsie is female. And we're not an easily definable rock group in the way they were. We'd fought the punk wars for those bands, but there was no way the Banshees could sanitise what they were doing.

At the same time, I was convinced there was enough surface glamour and gloss to tempt a mass audience without us compromising the substance. But in our hearts we knew we could never play the game. There'd always be that moment when, due to the sheer Bansheeness of it, we'd shoot ourselves in the foot.'

Martin McCarrick: 'We toured on the back of *Superstition*, then I don't know what happened. Another one of those breaks, I suppose.'

Severin: 'It had been over a year since we'd written any new songs, and I think we assumed we'd have two or three months off and do another album.'

March 1992
Siouxsie and Budgie relocate to France.

Sioux: 'It had been a couple of years in the planning. We'd been through the southwest of France when we were on tour and really liked the area, so we started looking for a house. When we saw the place we eventually moved into, we fell in love with it immediately, even though it needed a lot of renovation. I was convinced that the band could still function perfectly well with me and Budgie in France and Severin in London.'

Budgie: 'We knew we didn't want to move within commuting distance of London. We'd even thought of moving to America. But we'd hit on France back during the mixing of *Peepshow*, when we jumped in a car and drove through the north and discovered that we really enjoyed the lifestyle there. We made the final decision just before we went off to tour America in autumn 1991. We sold our place in London, put everything in storage and moved after we got back from the States.'

Billy Chainsaw: 'Nothing came as a surprise any more. I did think, "The manager's in Brighton, Severin's in London, now Siouxsie and Budgie are in the south of France." It wasn't the ideal setup, was it? And the Banshees weren't the most successful band in the world, and all that's gonna cost money. It made organising meetings more difficult. It seemed silly, really, and it did suggest further change.'

Budgie: 'It would have been worse had we not moved to France. I don't think we would have survived in London. We'd been trying to write and work as a band away from London since *Peepshow*, and we thought it would be great to get even further away from the distractions, hoping naively that the band would follow. It felt like a way forward.'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'Severin found it very hard. I think he felt pretty alienated at that point. Siouxsie's earpiece was now almost solely Budgie because he was the only one around. It became less like a band after they moved to France.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'Not long after, Severin sat me down and said, "Do you fancy moving to Paris so we're all a bit nearer to each other?" It was a vague possibility but, of course, it never happened.'

SIOUX: 'While we were in the States, we got the call to work on a song for the *Batman Returns* soundtrack. [Director] Tim Burton said that the only band he wanted to do it was the Banshees. That put Warners' nose out of joint immediately, because we were on Geffen in America, one of the company's main rivals.'

SEVERIN: 'We had no idea that the deal would involve a co-writer, this guy called Danny Elfman who's now known for the music on *The Simpsons*. But Tim was great and showed us rushes of the movie, which looked really good. Siouxsie was particularly keen on the project because it had Catwoman in it. I was a big fan of Tim's anyway, and it was interesting to get to meet him, but having Danny Elfman in the equation annoyed me.

'He had the most anal house you could imagine. It was one of those white adobe places like they have in Mexico, and he had all this wonderful Day of the Dead stuff, but displayed in specially cut-out bits of the wall as if the place was a museum. The entire house had been designed around the artefacts, which seemed totally pretentious. He kept going on about how popular his band had been in California, and we had absolutely no idea who they were. Then he revealed it was Oingo Boingo, one of those names you vaguely recognise but have never heard a single thing by. And never wanted to.'

SIOUX: 'I thought we could come up with better ideas. While in LA, I had the idea, which I put down on my Dictaphone, based on the rhythm and metre of "We Are Siamese" from *The Aristocats*. I rang Severin and we explored that angle a bit more back in London with Martin and Jon.

Once I'd sorted out with Hague what I didn't want from him, I gave him one more try. Severin was so smitten by him they could have had babies!'

SEVERIN: 'All we really had to worry about was stopping Danny Elfman from sticking his oar in. We did a rough demo of the song, "Face To Face", in London and sent him a tape so he could insert his funny theme bits, which actually worked quite well. It was a case of him fitting in with us rather than us having to work around him. Even though we'd been told that we'd be writing the song with him and that he'd be getting half the royalties, we had to make it as good as possible. It was going to have our name on it so it had to be something we could be proud of.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: '"Face To Face" was the first bit of recording we'd done in a while, and it was a nightmare. I'd been over to Severin's place in Battersea to hear what he'd come up with and to put down some simple string ideas. Then we went to Real World outside Bath where Stephen Hague was working with New Order. It was the same setup as during the making of *Superstition* – there he was with his computer.

'I had a disc for a sample for the song but I'd left it at home. At ten in the evening, Stephen Hague decided he wanted it. I drove all the way back to London, picked it up and drove straight back, by which time he'd gone to bed and the rest of the band were completely pissed. Fifty per cent of being in a band is pointless.'

BUDGIE: 'We finished the track off in RAK Studios, because New Order had moved there and had let us nick some of their studio time. Every time we met them, things would invariably get very messy.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'They'd installed their own Mancunian beer in the studio, which was a relief, because recording that song was otherwise non-eventful. A lot of the work was done in the States.'

SEVERIN: 'That was the best bit of it all, going out to LA, because I got to sit in at the Warner Brothers lot and watch as a Hollywood orchestra played over the top of a track we'd written. It was incredible to see something like that happening, because the movie world had always seemed unreal. The downside was that I had to spend three days with Danny Elfman. I had an evening with him and his agent, which was so dispiriting that it blew away all my romantic notions about writing music for films. They seemed to spend the whole time bitching about their peers and backstabbing. It really put me off.

'That's when the whole saga of the video began. Tim Burton had always said that he was going to do the video for the [*Batman Returns*] song once we'd written it, and he was constantly sending faxes to us with all these characters he'd come up with for it, really amazing creations. Quite a few of them later cropped up in his animated movie, *The Nightmare Before Christmas*.

BUDGIE: 'We recently heard that little Timmy used to cover his school notebooks with doodles of Siouxsie, and there weren't many people of that type in Hollywood. The drawings he did for the "Face To Face" video looked fantastic, and we were really excited about shooting the video with him.'

SEVERIN: 'The nightmare began when Warners showed *Batman Returns* to preview audiences and everyone absolutely hated the ending. In Tim's original, Catwoman dies at the end, but the audience couldn't deal with it so they made him reshoot the final scenes. That meant he was too busy to do our video.

'Siouxsie and Budgie were quite pleased with the finished version, but I absolutely hated it. Siouxsie looks great in it, dressed up Catwoman-style, but Budgie and I are really Penguinesque. It fits in with the general mood of the film, but when I first saw it, it was one of the few times that Siouxsie and I had a public row about anything we'd been involved with. I'm proud that we did it, but it's a shame it was so much hassle that we weren't able to appreciate it at the time.'

SIOUX: 'Severin had been made up to look grotesque and I thought that was a brave thing to do. I'm far too vain to have allowed that. I don't need any help in that department, thank you very much.

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'It was a strange time. When the three of them flew out to the States to discuss the film project, it was the first time Jon and I had been excluded. Tim Collins gave me some ridiculous reasons why, not far off the "camera wasn't big enough for five people" excuse. It felt as if the Banshees had hit Hollywood and become a threesome again. It didn't particularly bother me. It was just an odd thing to do.'

BUDGIE: 'I think Severin and I were simply props behind Siouxsie. It was no big deal, and certainly not intended as a slight to Martin or Jon.'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'Siouxsie, Steven and Budgie were partners in a business sense and, while it would be wrong to call Martin and Jon hired hands, that's how they felt. They were on a retainer during the quiet periods, during which time they both kept themselves busy, which was just as well because there wasn't a lot going on. I always thought the band took too long in the studio. They always aimed for perfection, but things are sometimes great by virtue of their faults. Overproduction also spoiled the sound of the Banshees. It was always tweaking, tweaking. That reached its nadir during the making of *The Rapture*.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'It was decided that we'd rehearse *The Rapture* in France at Siouxsie and Budgie's house. She'd been there on her own while Budgie was touring Europe with The Indigo Girls [December 1992], though she later joined him out there, and even sang a couple of Banshees songs with them. Severin was incensed. I remember him saying, "I bet she'll come back wearing bloody dungarees!"

'She said she loved it out there in this fairy-tale place, but it must have been hard spending so much time there on your own for the first time. Severin and I used to call her Miss Havisham.'

SIOUX: 'I've always loved being on my own, but here I was in this huge house. It was winter, I was isolated, couldn't go out, it was cold, rained all the time and we had plumbers and electricians in to rewire the place ready for the band coming in '93. It was a bombsite. The noise was driving me insane. They'd come from 7am to 7pm. I was so happy for a way out until it was all done.'

BUDGIE: 'The Indigo Girls wanted me to join them for some dates on the East Coast. I told them I couldn't leave Siouxsie in the house alone any longer, so they invited her along as their special guest, secretly hoping that she might sing a song or two!'

SIOUX: 'I played "Something Wicked" and "Strange Fruit" with them, the first time they'd ever been performed live. Both songs worked because they had a cello player and a violinist and I love that. It provided a nice counterpoint to the show which otherwise had a kind of round-the-campfire feel to it. I was back in my element. It was so perverse, playing to a shocked audience that couldn't believe what was going on.'

BUDGIE: 'Siouxsie came on in her spikiest black vinyl, the lighting guy turned on the blue and white lights, and the mood changed completely. It really worked.'

SEVERIN: 'Although the internal dynamics had probably died at the end of the *Peepshow* tour, we tried to patch everything up by working on *Superstition*, but that only made it worse because of the working methods. I felt that Siouxsie's insistence on doing *The Rapture* as a band album, rehearsed and recorded together in one room, was a knee-jerk reaction. A lot of *The Rapture* has that live sound to it, but I could never really see why that quality was so important. I went along with it for the sake of harmony, but I never really felt that it was the right thing for the band to be doing. It was probably the only way we were gonna get a record, but even then, it was still much harder than it should have been.'

SIOUX: 'It was the first time since *Peepshow* that we'd sat down as a band and written an entire record. It seemed far more stimulating to do it that way than working on tracks on our own. Steven was sulking a lot and permanently bad-tempered. But there was absolutely nothing to do except make music and talk to each other! I was desperate to pull the band in. That was the whole point – to get rid of the distractions.'

SEVERIN: 'I'm a city boy so I reluctantly agreed to rehearse at their place, on condition that it would be two weeks on and two weeks off. The town they'd moved to worried me because there was absolutely nothing to do. Strangely, considering we were all together, it didn't seem to make us work any harder. Siouxsie would lay in bed until noon and be ready to work by three, by which time we'd break for tea. We didn't get an awful lot done.'

BUDGIE: 'We wouldn't see Severin until two or three in the afternoon either, but that was normal practice. We wouldn't start recording in London until the afternoons. I thought the four of us actually got on well writing and rehearsing *The Rapture*.'

SIOUX: 'Severin would lock himself in a bedroom or hear us playing without him, and then storm off. And his specification that we only stayed together for two weeks at a time ended up costing a lot of money, which we couldn't really afford.'

Budgie: 'We knew the belt was being tightened, though the new scenario was also an opportunity for the band to sit down and discuss what we were doing. We should have felt quite strong again, but the reality didn't marry up.

Martin McCarrick: 'We wrote every day. If you had an idea, you could move into the dining room, which doubled as a rehearsal room. It was very relaxed, and I adapted to it very well. The weather was wonderful, I'd read a book outside in the sun in the morning, and we were getting on extremely well. Musically, it was good, too. We'd hit a band telepathy.'

Sioux: 'I would help direct things. A lot of our songs are melody-led, and so I had to learn to jump on anything I heard that might work. It was a bit like an editor's role.'

Jon Klein: 'We ended up in this posh, state-of-the-art residential studio outside Biarritz in the middle of a wood. All we had there was MTV and the French newspapers. We'd called in an engineer, Charlie Gray, who we'd worked with in Hoxton, but that didn't go as well as we'd hoped. I was starting to experiment with a *Kaleidoscope*-ish vibe, an atonal, late '70s English guitar sound, and he said, "I don't get it. It sounds out of tune and out of time". My response to that was, "Put the fucking red light on and keep your gob shut, mate."'

Sioux: 'I'd wanted Mike Hedges to produce *The Rapture*, but Tim and Steven dug in their heels. He would have been more expensive but it proved a false economy because we ended up scrapping a lot of things and redoing them. Charlie Gray was fine on the B-sides, but I wasn't convinced he could take the responsibility for an album. The first day he arrived, he said, "It's alright Siouxsie, I've been watching MTV!" I said, "What did you go and do that for?" He wasn't the creative accomplice we needed at the time.'

Martin McCarrick: 'Charlie lost the plot totally. One night I got up and he was in the living-room with a bottle of lighter fluid creating 100-foot long streams of fire. He'd become obsessed. He didn't know how to deal with the situation.'

Sioux: 'We'd come across his type before – someone who gets hired as an engineer, but halfway through proceedings decides that they've been hired as a producer and starts making decisions without asking us. He was getting above his station, which meant that things started to go wrong. It took a lot of work at the mixing stage to rectify everything.'

SEVERIN: 'We knew there wasn't a "Cities In Dust" or "Peek-A-Boo" anywhere on it, because there wasn't a particular theme to the album. The title track was something of a fulcrum, though. We wanted to do something a bit like "Switch" on *The Scream*, a song made up of lots of different movements, and when we were recording I was getting annoyed that it wasn't long enough. I wanted it to be total prog rock. I was going, "Eight minutes long? It should be twice that, at least!" I didn't care if it was a failure as long as it was ambitious. It gave me a focus because we were having loads of arguments about lyrics and stuff and it was becoming quite a painful record to make.'

JON KLEIN: 'Siouxsie and Steven always had this idea for a longer, more theatrical piece. I remember both Tim Collins and me telling Severin not to play it to Geffen's Mark Kates, who'd managed to sort out more funding for us, but he did anyway. So we're having this big rock 'n' roll meeting, the manager's worried because the American label's turned up, and it developed into this fight. Steven went into his Donald Sutherland mode. It was after dinner, and a few good-quality Cognacs had already gone down. Tim tried to defuse the issue, and said to Severin, "You don't half look like James Cagney when you're drunk!" Severin went mental and lobbed this glass right across the room and into £15,000 worth of music equipment.'

STEVEN: 'Another stumbling block was this song Budgie had written called "Hang Me High". The first time I heard the lyrics I hated them. There was so much Catholic imagery and it all seemed ridiculously goth. Budgie couldn't see what I was on about and I was really scared of criticising him because it would look as if I was going against him and Siouxsie. It was OK if Siouxsie or I wrote a song, but if Budgie got involved, then my opinion of it was always tainted in their eyes. By now the smallest disagreements were being blown out of proportion. Every argument seemed like it was going to be the end of the band.'

JON KLEIN: ' "Hang Me High" caused all sorts of ruptures between Siouxsie and Steven. Budgie insisted that we work on it. Severin said the band weren't about to record something he didn't understand. It ended up going on a B-side.'

BUDGIE: 'The song derived from a newspaper cutting about the stigmata marks of a young Italian girl and her humiliating ordeal at the hands of the Catholic Church. Siouxsie found it and I thought it was interesting, so I tried to piece something together from it. The lyric wasn't something that I'd wanted to purge myself of! A bit of encouragement would have been nice.'

SEVERIN: 'For the first time in our career, we played a new album to Polydor and they said that they didn't think it was finished. They didn't think we had enough songs and in the back of our minds we knew they were right. But we didn't have any time to rectify the situation because we had some summer festival dates booked.'

SIOUX: 'It was the first time we'd played in 18 months and we got to perform at a different European festival every weekend. It kicked off in Sweden. After the soundcheck, I was told by Tim that an MTV interview had been arranged. I said that I hadn't been told and that I didn't want to talk to fucking MTV, but I did it anyway. There was this vacant, toothy blonde facing me, so of course I was as awkward and as angular as I could be. Then I saw the vodka and proceeded to drink her under the table throughout the interview. I carried on till showtime. I got pissed because I was pissed off. I'd been arguing with Steven and Tim a lot by then. It was the only time I'd ever done that. That's how bad things were getting.'

SEVERIN: 'It was dreadful. There wasn't a note in tune. By the following weekend, when we played outside Lisbon, things were back to normal and we got the show out of the way before the boozing started. We were supported by Blur, who turned out to be real lightweights. The next morning, their drummer was found passed out on the airport floor, the big softie.

'We also played the Reading Festival, only because it happened to fall at a time when we were available, but I wish we hadn't done it. It didn't feel right being just another name on the bill alongside a bunch of mediocre bands. I felt like we were selling ourselves a bit short. It was nice going somewhere different every weekend, though. They were like smash-and-grab raids.'

August 1994
Morrissey invites Siouxsie to duet with him on an old Timi Yuro song, 'Interlude'.

SIOUX: 'He'd approached me to do this dreamy obscure song as a one-off. While I wasn't a fan of his work, or his voice, I thought his humour was interesting and I was intrigued. It was all very civilised, and then we got to talking about the video after I'd finished my vocals on the track, which intrigued me even more. The original idea was to have original black-and-white archive footage of Ruth Ellis walking to the gallows. [Ellis was the last woman to be hanged in England.] I thought the combination of the music with these visuals was inspired genius. However, this all fell through because I think permission to use the footage was refused, or else they just didn't have the money for it.

'Next thing, we were in London at his house discussing the alternative video with the director. Morrissey had decided that he wanted to use a bulldog – a nasty British nationalist icon – which, together with his recent flirtations with the Union Jack, alarmed me. I said, "If you want to use a dog, why not use a chihuahua or a wolf?" I wanted nothing to do with this stupid imagery. We got into a slanging match that ended with him saying, "What's wrong with being pro-Britain?" I said, "What's bloody right with it?" The director nervously started interjecting trivial suggestions about what we were going to wear, so I just said, "Look, we're wearing pink rabbit costumes! OK, Morrissey?" By then, I'd realised the whole thing had become a complete joke. He obviously doesn't like confrontation, and I like talking direct.

'So he disappears with this guy from EMI. A little later, the guy comes back and says, "Morrissey's got a meeting to go to." I took my cue and left with the video director. Later, I got a message via Tim: "There won't be a video shoot tomorrow. Morrissey won't work with Siouxsie. She's too aggressive. And that was that."'

SIOUX: 'We decided we needed to work with a proper producer to finish off the new album, and me and Budgie knew John Cale's manager from the time that we saw the Velvet Underground reunion shows in Paris.'

SEVERIN: 'He was everything I expected him to be – unfortunately. It was April '94 before we were able to start work with him, which meant that it had been ten months since we'd finished the rough version of the album. He was brilliant for the first two weeks, adding final touches to the post-production because we'd never worked with a musician of his calibre before. He was great at coming up with musical ideas, but he was terribly severe about any kind of slackness. He gave me a right dressing-down one day for being half an hour late to the studio.'

John Cale (producer): 'I was just out of the woods myself, so I didn't really socialise. And we just didn't have time anyway. I was hired to mix because the album was finished, basically. But when I listened to the raw material, I thought, "This has been done a long time ago. Why don't we try something new?" You gotta jump on the cutting edge or else you're missing out on all the fun bits in rock 'n' roll. The songs had the grandiosity of a Phil Spector rather than the grandiosity of a Beck – plenty of echo over a mixture of blues and Wagnerian music. With Beck, all sorts of things were happening that you couldn't do back in 1970. It seemed as if they were crying out to do that, but they were too emotionally exhausted to do it.'

Martin McCarrick: 'Cale took it to a different level, stripped everything down. There was no point in changing the Banshees but that seemed to be what he was doing. The pre-production was hilarious, though. He brought in an American engineer and sat reading the paper.'

Severin: 'He had great ideas considering he'd come in at such a late stage, but I wanted him to be a bit more intense about it. He seemed to delegate a bit too much for my liking. I didn't want to be in the studio watching John Cale with his feet up reading the *Wall Street Journal* while his engineer worked on the guitar overdubs.'

John Cale: 'It was a rather awkward introduction to Siouxsie And The Banshees. With all the goodwill in the world, you could not overcome the mood of the band. When I got there, somebody told me how long the band had been together and I thought, "Holy Shit! It's a wonder these people are still talking to each other." It seemed like everybody was in pain, but actually quiet about it.'

Severin: 'That's very astute of him. It was the first time we'd had such negative feedback from the record company, and that's why we brought Cale in. We recorded five new songs, but those songs should have been polished before we took them to him. We worked with him ten years later than we should have done. It was rushed.'

SIOUX: 'I admit, it was a strange time, but I was hoping for a bit more spontaneity, for something off-the-wall to happen. I wanted him to say, "Try doing this while standing on your head," but it was flat. It felt like he was working for the record company.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'Other things were getting in the way, too. The contracts Jon and I had with Polydor had run out with a week's recording still to go, and we were obliged to renegotiate them. Obviously, the label didn't want to – they felt enough had been spent on the album already. But Tim Collins didn't want to talk about it at all.'

SIOUX: 'I didn't know about Jon and Martin's wrangles over the Polydor contract. The way it was put to me was that Jon was really digging in his heels, that he wanted a bigger cut of the publishing or else he wouldn't come out on the road with us. Obviously, I thought, "He can't blackmail us!" Tim really dealt with that side of things, and he wasn't good at communicating with me at all.'

JON KLEIN: 'It had nothing to do with publishing. That was a separate issue. It was purely about the fact that me and Martin couldn't pay our rent. We'd signed a great deal, and then got fucked on it. The management didn't fight our corner at all. I was on the phone saying, "For fuck's sake, we're talking about a few hundred quid here." We'd been there right the way through, chucked in more than we'd been asked to do, and doing everything we could so the record wouldn't derail.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'Around the same time, there was a very strange incident involving Jon and [Dead Or Alive's] Pete Burns. The band had arranged to meet at Fred's in Soho. I escaped fairly quickly, but Siouxsie, Budgie and Jon stuck around.'

JON KLEIN: 'Budgie started to knock back double chasers between the beers, and apologised for the financial problems. He said they didn't realise how bad it had got. Then Pete Burns turns up, and he's looking pretty good. He'd been working out in a health club in Westbourne Grove where my sister had worked. She'd done him a lot of favours, sorting out short-term memberships and stuff. Someone said, "Do you know what's happened to Jon's sister?" Pete Burns turns and says, "Who's she? She's a nobody." I thought, "Who the fuck do you think you are?" First there's all this shit going on with Polydor and now this. I went mental.'

BUDGIE: 'I'd not seen Pete for years. He was always game for a good slanging match, and so was Lynn, his partner. Words were exchanged, then Pete said, "Your guitarist is a bit worse for wear," and they left. That's when Jon went running outside and emptied a pint of lager over Lynn's head. The dark side had come out, but he didn't realise how vicious they could be.'

JON KLEIN: 'I probably did deserve half a slap, to be honest. I was extremely angry. I remember hearing this scream from behind, getting pushed in the back and my head hitting the gutter. When I came round, him and his woman were on top of me with stilettos in their hands. I had fucking puncture wounds in my arse and had to have dozens of stitches in my head. They could have killed me. I didn't deserve that.'

BUDGIE: 'Everybody tried to calm Jon down. He was badly cut round the head, so I took him to hospital and sat with him all night while he got stitched up.'

JON KLEIN: 'I wanted to take legal action, but I was told by Tim Collins not to go there, that no one could remember seeing anything. That's why I went to the newspaper. I didn't want this guy getting away with this shit. Sioux was pissed off that the first mention of John Cale working with the Banshees was next to a picture of my arse in the paper. Well, I'm sorry, but ...'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'That wasn't the Banshees style at all, but I could never understand why they never supported Jon. It was almost shocking why they were unsympathetic. From then on, things just deteriorated between the band and Jon.'

SEVERIN: 'We now had so much time on our hands, we started to have these ridiculous arguments about who wrote what and who should get paid how much. We appeased Martin fairly quickly, but Jon kicked up a fuss about every single detail. There were offers flying back and forth between us all the time with percentages being changed all the time.'

Martin McCarrick: ‘It was in the contract that the three had 80 per cent of the songwriting, which meant that only 20 per cent was left over on each album. If I’d written much of, say, the title track for *The Rapture*, I felt I deserved a part of that. There are always ways round this, but Tim would accuse me of not writing songs, even though he hadn’t been at the sessions. He was also trying to agree to a certain amount of publishing as long as we’d agree to tour the next record. Jon and I said the two were simply not related. It was like bribery. In the meantime, Jon had been ousted and no one had bothered to tell me.’

Severin: ‘Jon had dug his heels in and refused to compromise on anything. Tim had said that if he didn’t sort everything out and commit to the tour, he was out of the band. He wouldn’t, so we sacked him. It was horrible, because he’d been in the band for seven years and here he was, prepared to blow the whole thing for five per cent.’

Jon Klein: ‘A tour had been booked and I’d been pressurised to agree to go on the road. But fights with the management and the label sticking the boot in meant it was very difficult to get on with the show, especially after the Burns incident. A few things had stacked up. The letter I received was pretty curt, but it was OK. The Banshees are still one of my favourite bands. I didn’t necessarily need to be in them.’

Billy Chainsaw: ‘The reason that Jon got the sack was that he’d long since said goodbye to most of his hair. A review in the *Evening Standard* described him as Max Wall. That was definitely the straw that broke the camel’s back.’

Jon Klein: ‘Dodgy barnet! I was really stubborn. I thought it was Richard O’Brien and it got interpreted as Max Wall. It did look a bit fucking scary.’

Martin McCarrick: ‘Siouxsie took the review as a slight against the band and thought it made us look like fools, though there was a lot more to it than that, not least that she and Jon weren’t hitting it off any longer. Sometimes, it’s best not to read reviews …’

Sioux: ‘I wasn’t that upset about the review, though I had been trying to get Jon to shave his head. I used to tell him, “Think of Yul Brynner!” I didn’t want to hurt his feelings. But by then Jon wasn’t hitting with anyone much. He was having a lot of rows with Steven and

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'Tim told me that Jon had withdrawn his services, but I saw the letter he'd sent firing him. It was stupid cloak-and-dagger stuff. Things had started to turn. I hate dishonesty and I felt I was being treated like a pillock. The trust between management and myself had been broken. It was Jon's exit and very nearly mine. I told Steven and he mumbled something about it having to happen. I didn't know whether to carry on. I liked the album, but I also felt loyal to Jon. It was a weird feeling being in the band after that.'

10 'We Didn't Even Need To Discuss It With Each Other Any More. We Just Knew It Was Over'

– Siouxsie Sioux

SIOUX: 'We were always outside the whole "Flavour of the Week" thing in the music scene, and for most of our career we were an anomaly. That was why we managed to keep on going so long.'

SEVERIN: 'There was always this feeling that if we got the right single or album, it could propel us to another level of success. You see a band like Depeche Mode who get lucky and release a record that endears them to the American audience, and once you get that you never go down from that. That's what we were working towards and we did come so close. We knew we were never going to be super-hip again, but we were still hoping for that lucky break.'

December 1994
'O Baby'.

SEVERIN: 'I wasn't entirely sure about it. I knew it would either be a huge success or a failure. It turned out to be a failure. It had been nearly four years since we'd released an album and that's an entire generation of music fans. In '91 we were up against grunge and now it was Britpop. We were continually out of kilter with general tastes.'

SIOUX: '"O Baby" was one of the last songs we'd done with Cale, and it was totally out of character. It was fresh and unlike anything else we'd done. I was looking forward to playing this Bette Davis character that terrorises children at this pageant for the video, but, just as I'd planned to go, my mother died on 4 November. That really devastated me. I felt that nothing else mattered. I was in total shock. I was ferried off to to the States to do the video but I was on autopilot, covering up the grief. I wish someone has just said, "Don't do it. It doesn't matter."

'Over the years, I'd begun to see her a lot, then when I was in France I'd phone her every weekend. We'd become very tight. She'd been ill before Budgie and I got married, but had recovered. This time, my brother called and told me that she was in hospital and had had another operation, but that she was alright. I'd booked a flight to see her anyway, and surprise her for her birthday, on 6 November. But in the middle of the night, that same evening, I got another call to say that she'd died. I hadn't seen her in a while, though I'd planned to bring her over to France and give her something back. She would have loved the big garden, and I'm sure the English weather wasn't good for her. I can still see her now in her "Hong Kong Garden" T-shirt looking so proud and happy when she came to see us for the first time at the Hammersmith Odeon in 1978. I was her number one fan.'

'Whenever I'd thought about stopping the band, I'd always tell myself, "Oh, my mum will be really upset if I did that!" Now that she wasn't going to be around, I knew it wouldn't upset her any more. And the relationship within the band had really broken down by this time. I felt increasingly irritated and frustrated by Steven and Tim always talking business, always plotting the next campaign. It left me cold. I never wanted to rule the world. I've only ever wanted autonomy. I used to say, "Please, Severin, strap your fucking bass guitar on and start playing those fantastic basslines like you used to."'

February 1995
The Rapture.

SEVERIN: 'Siouxsie had been to New York with Cale for the final mix – that was the first time stuff was mixed without me. I just wanted the whole thing finished. I couldn't be bothered and unfortunately the end result is that the four or five songs he worked on sound far more sterile than the earlier tracks. Sometimes you have to have the courage to say "Stop" and we should have done that a bit earlier with *The Rapture*. I wouldn't wash my hands of it entirely, but it was a bit overworked.'

BUDGIE: ''I think Polydor were sick of throwing money at it and they were happy to just get it out of the way. We felt that we still had a lot to offer, but Polydor had certainly changed by then.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'Finishing off *The Rapture*, it became more apparent that Sioux had become really unhappy with things. There had been problems with Jon, and a few other things going on.'

SIOUX: 'I did this interview with *Time Out*, and I was quoted as saying "I wouldn't piss on Polydor if they were on fire." It was a quote from 1979, but it held true for the way we were feeling about them.'

SEVERIN: 'The company had got a new managing director in, a Frenchman we'd never met. He'd taken on *The Rapture* halfway through and he took complete umbrage at Siouxsie's comments. Our option was up for renewal and when the accountants looked at the figures they decided that it just wasn't worth their while. The advance orders on the album weren't great and they weren't the slightest bit interested in looking at the wider picture. Because we weren't signed to Polydor worldwide, they had no idea how successful we'd been with Lollapalooza. They simply saw us as something that was costing them a million quid or whatever.'

SIOUX: 'The album had come out on Monday 16 February, and we were dropped on Friday 27, nine days into the *Rapture* tour. Geffen were still hugely supportive of us in America, so it wasn't like we felt everything had come to an end. It was still a bit of a weird feeling, though, because it was fairly unexpected. We knew the album had taken a long time, but now it was finished, we thought it could do well if they gave it a chance and worked it a bit.'

JON KLEIN: 'Not long before I left, Martin had overheard some record-company woman at a video shoot saying, "But where the fuck are these chart positions?" The relationship with Polydor had deteriorated badly.'

SEVERIN: 'I'd been nervous in the late '80s when our contract was up for renewal, but they kept us on then and I'd hoped they'd do the same again. However, this time round there was just a phone call to the manager and a fax thanking us for our years of service. We didn't even get a gold clock!'

SIOUX: 'I couldn't give a damn whether we were with Polydor or not. They'd started interfering too much. I thought, "Good riddance, let's get another deal elsewhere."'

SEVERIN: 'By the time we were dropped, the big-brand acts on the label were The Bee Gees, James Last and Status Quo, who were far easier for the company to deal with than us. What galled us even more was that in the early to mid-'90s Polydor hadn't brought anybody else through. Their biggest discovery was Shed Seven, who didn't exactly set the world alight. It had turned into a throwaway pop label, which I guess left us looking even more out of place.'

TIM COLLINS: 'What kept us going with Polydor was the Geffen deal. Such were the terms of the contract between the two that if Polydor dropped the band, they were still liable to deliver any subsequent record to Geffen, regardless of what label it was on. It was a completely undeliverable position. I sent them a fax explaining that they couldn't drop us because they retained commitments. That ended up costing Polydor a fortune. I thought the future might be brighter elsewhere, anyway, though certainly not as well paid.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'They'd met Knox while out in New York. I wasn't involved in that at all. The Banshees world seemed to be going on without me. Nevertheless, he was brilliant, a lovely guy, mad as a fish. He'd put his own problems with drugs and drink. He went to bed early, watched movies all the time, anything that took his mind off alcohol. His main vice was smoking and drinking 40 cups of coffee in the morning. He was speeding his tits off by 11!

'Knox was a good guitarist and a good leveller for Siouxsie, Severin and Budgie. He was a calming influence. Americans are different to us. They say things as they are. They question things that need explaining. And that was useful, not least because Budgie was still drinking, probably more than ever.'

SEVERIN: 'The thing that appealed to us was that he'd recently toured with Psychedelic Furs. He was a nice guy, learned our songs really quickly, didn't begrudge pouring me into the back of a cab at the end of a late night. He was a lot of fun and we hung out all the time.'

SIOUX: 'In a way it was good that we got dropped in the middle of the tour, because we really didn't have time to think about anything. We had to just get on with playing.'

SEVERIN: 'As the tour went on, it was increasingly obvious that Budgie was going off the rails. While Siouxsie was going to bed at 10 or 11 in the evening, our security guy was being forced to stay up with him all night in casinos and dodgy transvestite bars. It didn't seem right at all.

'He got more excessive as the tour progressed. One day in Hamburg [8 March 1995], I passed him in the street at 11 in the morning and noticed that he was already completely pissed. Things were coming to a head, but I don't think any of us wanted to deal with it.'

BUDGIE: 'Making myself incapable was a statement. I would gleefully go over the top, because sometimes it was my only way of saying, "Hello, I'm here," and that feeling intensified towards the end. The drinking was like a barometer. I'd begun to realise that I was never going to be happy in the band. The music wasn't getting any better, and the tension and the lifestyle weren't getting any easier.'

SIOUX: 'Budgie was never drunk for a show or a rehearsal. Was he running away from responsibility? That's Budgie's character anyway. Especially then, he'd do anything to avoid confrontation. If he had a problem with someone, he'd drink. He's one of those people that hasn't got a mean bone in his body. Of course, that can be annoying! He's been taken advantage of for his sweet nature, and at times he brings that on himself. But I've given him some valuable lessons – stand up to them!'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'There must be an awful lot of things that he doesn't remember. When I first joined, he'd cleaned up a lot. But it did get bad. Budgie would go off on these all-nighters, and completely lose the plot. He'd talk to you and it would be complete nonsense. He'd become vaguely argumentative. Budgie's a lovely guy, very down-to-earth, always interested in people. He never had the snobbery that might have been there on occasion. But when he was drunk, he could be awful. You could always tell when he'd been on a binge because next morning he'd be physically altered. I'd say to Steven, "Look at Budgie's face, he looks like someone else." He'd look completely bizarre, like the demons had got to him.'

4 April 1995
The Banshees begin an extended tour of the Americas with a show at the Vogue Theatre, Vancouver.

SEVERIN: 'On top of Budgie's excesses, when we'd finished the European tour and went off to America, it had become obvious that the album wasn't selling nearly as well as we'd thought. Geffen had a lot of good reasons for why we weren't selling, based on changing demographics and stuff like that, so they were still right behind us and didn't have any intention of losing us to another label. Despite the fact that the record had completely bombed in America, the US shows all sold out, even though it was obvious we were down to the core of our audience. The people we'd picked up four years earlier on Lollapalooza had deserted us and moved onto something else, the fickle bastards.'

19 May
Mexico City

BUDGIE: 'We landed, had a disorganised press conference, and I felt like I needed a couple of drinks. I always had trouble coming down after the excitement of landing somewhere new. I'd want to get lost in the place immediately, so I went off with some of the crew and hit a club. I remember drinking Mezcal (tequila) at the hotel. It was 14-year-old cask matured; lethal stuff. Tequila always sent me crazy. I woke up next day and felt so bad that I had to reach for another drink. That had never happened before. So I left the hotel with some miniatures from the minibar.'

SEVERIN: 'We'd played an amazing gig indoors to 7,000–8,000 people the night before, then we had to fly down from Mexico to São Paulo. Budgie was drunk even before the plane took off, and I was faced with the realisation that I'd have to put up with ten hours of him acting completely crazy.'

BUDGIE: 'I'd already hit the bar with the bass tech Kelly, and by the time we were ready to check in I was going for it. It was middle of the afternoon and it seemed like fun. Then I looked up and saw the band and crew checking in well away from me. They didn't want to be near me. They were shouting things and I remember feeling a bit hurt. I sat on the plane, pretended to read the newspaper, which was in Portuguese, and imagined I was in a film. I always did. None of it ever seemed real. Being in the band, going out on tour, it was like a dream come true. It couldn't get big enough. The fantasy could never, ever get big enough.

'I thought, "It's only a short flight from Mexico to São Paulo, a glass of champagne and we'll be there." But it was long haul, so I just carried on drinking. I had no fear, no inhibitions. That always happened and it would inevitably land me in embarrassing or even dangerous positions. I was buying make-up kits, hanging out with the crew, flirting with everybody. The worst behaviour you can imagine.'

SEVERIN: 'There was a moment when Budgie decided he was going to go off and have a chat with the pilot, so he staggered off down the aisle. And Siouxsie came back and sat with me, and said, "We should knock the band on the head, shouldn't we? It's not doing anyone any good and it's not any fun." I looked up at her and said, "Yeah, you're right, we should stop." It was literally as matter-of-fact as that.

'There was no big drama and in many ways I'd been waiting for her to make the first move and suggest it. It was even more of a concern for Siouxsie because, the way that Budgie was behaving, it was either their marriage or the band. And we all knew that meant the band had to end.'

SIOUX: 'I would never have said it was either the band or my marriage. It was the end because, on top of the issue of Budgie's health, I'd had enough of putting up this pretence. And I was ill. My body was trying to tell me something. We didn't tell any of the others. Not even Tim. I told Budgie quietly after we'd got back from the tour.'

BUDGIE: 'We'd got off in São Paulo, checked into the hotel and I started to really feel bad. I felt I was gonna crawl into this black hole which I'd made and die there. Everything was vibrating, the walls were making noises, and I'd never experienced anything like that before. It scared the hell out of me. Siouxsie came to see me that night, and I still wasn't feeling any better. Severin made an attempt to laugh it off as "one of those things", but I knew it wasn't. It was a real awakening. I'd injured myself, hurt Siouxsie and hurt everyone else. I felt small, and too embarrassed to go out of the room.

'Sioux was frightened that I was turning into her father, that she had been attracted to the person that was least good for her. I knew I couldn't possibly put her through that.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'It was good to have Knox on the tour. After the Mexico–Brazil incident, Budgie turned to him and said, "I wanna stop."'

KNOX: 'I loved Budgie from the first day I met him. He was aware that I'd quit drinking and stuff years earlier, and so we'd talk and hang out. By this time, though, it was obvious that the band were getting kinda fed up with his drinking, and on that flight, he pissed everyone off – including me! The day after we'd arrived in São Paulo, he called me and said he wanted to talk. And we did – for something like four hours. He really opened up in a way that English men rarely do. I told him how I'd felt when I once hit rock bottom, and he said he never realised anyone else had felt like he did. He felt a sense of shame. He'd really had enough. I could sense that Budgie was ready for change.'

BUDGIE: 'It was a conversation that changed my life completely.

'Those last few dates were extremely difficult, but the experience was a revelation, an epiphany of sorts. When we got to Rio, I'd noticed that the chambermaid had left a metre-long circle of ribbon on the writing desk. It was the span of the outstretched arms of a statue of the Virgin Mary in a little village north of Rio, and on it was written a prayer. A nearby card gave an English translation.

'The idea was to loop it around your wrist three times, tie three knots in it and make three wishes, which I did. It stayed on my arm for years, a constant reminder. I remember looking out of the hotel room and seeing the Sugar Loaf Mountains and the ocean and thinking, "You're in this amazing place. Now make sure you remember it." Since then, that's what it's all been about. It was uncanny that a religious artefact gave me solace, because I lay the blame firmly at the door of Catholicism for a lot of my problems, for never being able to talk about emotional stuff or the death of my mother.'

SIOUX: 'We'd gone ahead and played the shows that were left on the tour, but it was decided that there really was no point in carrying on after that. We didn't even need to discuss it with each other any more, we just knew it was over.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'I don't remember them calling it quits on the plane at all.'

BUDGIE: 'I honestly don't believe that I was the reason it ended, but I know that my behaviour contributed to it. There had been other moments – the end of the *Peepshow* tour, John McGeoch in Madrid. The key thing was that, on this particular occasion, unlike all the others, there was no longer a willingness to pick things up again and continue. I personally couldn't go back to a situation that had caused a lot of the unhappiness. The band wasn't happy. There was a lot of pain, and I don't think anyone was gonna own up to it. The light had gone out.'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'Siouxsie and Steven were the creators. Budgie did his bit, but on a songwriting level he always wanted more of a role. Severin hated that idea. I don't ever think Severin took Budgie to heart. Whether that went back to the fact that he used to be Sioux's partner and he didn't think Budgie was the right partner for her, I don't know. Maybe he thought Budgie was a bit wet behind the ears.'

SEVERIN: 'I only cared about the band. Siouxsie always thinks that I was hard on Budgie because of their relationship, but that's not the case. I was hard on Budgie because he was supposed to be a Banshee, and when I saw him drunk and behaving like an idiot he wasn't wearing the right suit as far as I was concerned. That's the only reason. Sioux misinterpreted it as some kind of sexual jealousy and that was never the case.

'I wasn't nearly as hard on him as Siouxsie was. She would publicly demolish him. That was the nature of their relationship. I once came across two old prints in an antique shop. One was of Lady Macbeth, the other of a court jester, and I had to buy them because those were the two people I was working with. Budgie would always take over and play the fool until Siouxsie would cut him to shreds or physically attack him and put him in his place. And that was the dynamic in the band until he stopped drinking.'

Sioux: 'I was hard on Budgie. I was trying to get his attention. One of my ways of trying to get him to understand why it was so upsetting to me was by telling him that it was bringing back horrible memories. I thought, "Does it all come down to where you come from, that eventually you end up marrying the thing you've been trying to run away from all of your life?" That totally depressed me, made me feel like a pawn in one of life's games. I was not interested in looking after a problem drinker. There was genuine concern, but there was anger as well.'

6 June 1995
The first of a handful of summer festival appearances takes place in Budapest, Hungary.

Sioux: 'We always knew we could play again if we wanted to because we had such a strong bond between us. And on that last tour we were beginning to get sick of people continually defining us in terms of our past, as punk survivors. Eventually you can't be bothered fighting against it any more because you simply don't have the energy. Even though we had two months of gigs to play, no one's resolve wavered in the slightest. We were determined to think of it positively, to treat it not as retirement, but as moving on to something else.'

Martin McCarrick: 'It didn't feel like the last tour. There had even been talk of an album with Knox. But Siouxsie did keep falling ill, not little colds but serious throat and bronchial infections that needed steroids before she could sing. The strain really started to show on her. One night, she was in tears. It was devastating to see her so upset. I knew that something was seriously wrong. She had these constant coughing fits, and yet she'd still carry on.'

Sioux: 'I'd previously had cortisone shots while on tour, but I was told by a specialist in Paris that they had bad side effects. It had allowed me to sing, but at the expense of irreparable damage to the body and possible depression. So I discovered this vitamin C injection, which Doctor Knox was happy to administer.

'We'd been asked to write a song for this new film, *Showgirls*. The idea was good, but the film turned out to be crap. I called it "New Skin".

Years later, a fan asked, what is Siouxsie's preoccupation with skin? It does crop up in so many songs, and I suppose it's always wanting to see beyond the mortal body, realising that the truly important thing in a person is, for want of another word, the spirit.'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'Listen to the lyrics. It's all about throwing things away, pissing out of the window. It really summed up what was happening. You knew that she was about to move on.'

SEVERIN: 'We were in Poland, so I suggested that we record the song in Prague, because it was a nice city. It wasn't the worst idea I ever came up with, but it was pretty close. The studio was terrible and we spent half the time fooling around with screwdrivers to get things to work. Still, I'm glad we did it because it was the only thing we ever got to record with Knox.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'We'd heard the studio was fantastic. It turned out to be in the suburbs of Prague, in an unattractive, typical east European block of council flats. It was like a community centre. Kids wandered in and out, there were ants in the desk, it was an awful studio. I'd had enough, really. It was no fun any more.'

SIOUX: 'It was like, "Fuck you." "The miles and minutes pissing by my window." It was a final parting shot, the phoenix rising out of the ashes spitting and snarling. It would have been nice to have recorded the song with the Prague Orchestra, but we were in the wrong studio.'

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'It was while they were away in this studio in eastern Europe that I decided to leave. I was bored. It had become an office job, sitting at a desk, shuffling bits of paper around. The time between the records and tours had got longer and longer. I rang Sioux as soon as she got back, and spilled it all out. It was the hardest thing to do but at the same time the easiest because I'd found my own publishing project and I knew I had to do it.

'She said, "That's it, then." I said, "What?" She said, "You're off, we're gonna split up." The next day, I'm in the office in Brighton and I tell Tim Collins that I'm leaving. An hour later, the phone rings and Sioux asks to speak to Tim. I knew exactly what this call meant, though I didn't expect it to come the next day. When Tim finally puts the phone down, he cries out, "Chainsaw, what have you fucking done?" To this day, he doesn't know that I had that chat with Sioux the night before, when she told me she was going to split up the band. I denied any knowledge of it. That's how it had to be.'

BUDGIE: 'Those last few dates in Eastern Europe probably strengthened my resolve against drink. Here I was back on the road with a band on a bender. Knox had years of experience dealing with drinkers whilst sober, but for me it was really difficult. After the Zillo festival in Germany (10 June 1995), there was an all-night session with Front 242 in the hotel bar. Next day it was me who was keeping my distance from the party that shuffled through the airport on route to Poland. In Warsaw we had a taste of the good old days, borrowing equipment to do the show as our own gear had been impounded at the border. Knox loved it. I loved the little punk rock gig we did in Zabrze the next day, but Siouxsie was desperately unhappy. I suppose when a big part of your partner's character suddenly disappears, it's bound to unbalance the scales, but I couldn't take all the blame.'

MARTIN MCCARRICK 'I found out through my girlfriend, who was a close friend of Severin's girlfriend, Cricket. It wasn't surprising, but I was disappointed. I never let on that I knew. I was more than ready for the next part of my life. The shows weren't going right any more, even the professionalism had gone.'

21 July 1995

Axion Beach Rock Festival, Zeebrugge, Belgium. The band were bottom of the bill behind Oasis, Simple Minds, Paul Weller and Faith No More.

SIOUX: 'I wore my old Westwood T-shirt with the two cowboys with their dicks hanging out. That was my only concession to history, and it summed up totally the way I felt. I just couldn't wait to get the hell out of there. Despite all these feelings, I was looking forward to the end and was feeling lighter by the minute. I had so much fun during the show that I was reminded of the *Tom And Jerry* cartoon where, so long as the music is playing, all is harmonious, but as soon as the music stops, they're back trying to destroy each other.'

STEVEN: 'We actually took a kind of perverse glee in it being the last show, but Martin got very emotional and weepy about it all. I said to him, "What are you so sad about you silly bugger, you've only been in the band seven years!"'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'At the start, being in the Banshees had been an absolute dream. I was 23, riding through LA in a limo and with my own suite in a hotel and Iggy Pop was turning up to see us. Now here I was, with a towel on my head, playing on a beach in the hot afternoon sun. It was the worst possible way for the Banshees to bow out. They should have gone out with an explosion at some dark, sweaty event at the 100 Club. Years of work ended – like that. No one said anything. Even at this extremely emotional time, no one gave a hug. They wrote this intensely emotional music but they could never express that side of themselves to one another. Nothing was ever out in the open. We lived on our wits a lot of the time.'

BUDGIE: 'I suppose the Beach Festival was a suitably surreal swan song. Siouxsie, always the consummate professional, left the real world in the dressing-room as she sang a final "Spellbound" in the afternoon sun. I remember the after-show ambivalence turning to relief as our taxi headed for the airport.'

11 'It Was Great To See Her Stalking Around The Stage, Looking Just Like The Siouxsie I Remembered'

– Martin McCarrick

SIOUX: 'Severin told me about this offer that had come in for the Coachella Festival outside LA. It was a lot of money, but I wasn't sure. Budgie was thinking, and going, "Yeah?" I thought, perhaps if it was just the four of us (I only imagined Knox being a part of it) and we did a set that had the spirit of what the Banshees really meant. The way the band had ended hurt us, that lack of care that crept in at the very end, it wasn't right. We decided to do seven shows from the East Coast to the West, and it grew from there.'

SEVERIN: 'It was really exciting to think about the possibility of us doing something like that again, especially because there had been an almost complete thaw in the cold war between me and Siouxsie. We share the same hairdresser, this guy called Donald, and only a couple of weeks earlier he'd said she was in London for a few days. We met up for dinner and immediately discovered that it was like old times, that we could really enjoy each other's company again. I wondered why we'd ever stopped in the first place. It felt really good to be having such fun with her again after all the bitterness of the previous few years.'

SEVERIN: 'We always felt we were part of a heritage that went back to the Velvets and glam rock, and kind of expected that someone would have picked up on what we did and taken it onwards. No one really has, though. I thought Nirvana had it for a while, but no one else has come close to combining the drama, the subversion and the charisma of the Banshees at our best. Which is another reason why there was a validity to getting back and playing again.'

17 April 2002
The *Seven Year Itch* tour begins at Washington, DC.

BILLY CHAINSAW: '*Seven Year Itch*? I laughed heartily at that! At least, they'd retained their sense of humour.'

SIOUX: 'I came up with the *Seven Year Itch*. I thought, whatever happens we've gotta have a laugh and enjoy this. Everything was done quickly. We didn't want to do a hits tour. It was a celebration of the band's strongest points, that sense of alienation, power, the tension. So many people hate that because it makes them feel uncomfortable, but that's what we were about. And still are. That really excited me.'

KNOX: 'I was surprised that the band had split up in the first place. I hadn't seen it coming at all. But I wasn't surprised when I got the call for the *Seven Year Itch* tour. You kind of expect the unexpected with the Banshees. They hit me with a load of songs to learn, so I had a virtual history lesson through the work of their various guitar players. It was an imaginative set-list – Siouxsie and Budgie love their B-sides and all the obscure stuff – and we'd change it around too, sometimes when we were actually on the stage!'

SEVERIN: 'Budgie and I clicked much more during the last tour than ever before because he was sober. Pure and simple. In the intervening years, he's kind of caught up.'

BUDGIE: 'It's strange. Severin had plenty of opportunities to get to know me better. I was sober for the *Tinderbox*, *Looking Glass* and *Peepshow* tours of the States. But those times when I'd quit drinking it was as if I'd become invisible, or maybe it was just that I'd begun to notice how little we ever actually said to each other. Still, it was good to play together one last time'

9 & 10 July 2002
The *Itch* arrives in London for two nights at the Shepherd's Bush Empire.

BILLY CHAINSAW: 'Why would I want to see them seven years after it was all over?'

MARTIN MCCARRICK: 'It was absolutely brilliant, enthralling to watch.

Budgie called me about it and apologetically said that they were going out as a four-piece. In one sense, I'd have dearly loved to be there again, but going back to the Banshees after what I've done in the interim with Therapy? wouldn't have been right.

'It was great to see her looking just like the Siouxsie I remembered as a kid. I had a big grin throughout the show, watching this huge jackbooted creature, like a Tim Burton cartoon come to life. When I went backstage, we got our bottles of brandy out as we always did.'

Marc Almond: 'You can encapsulate an iconic person in a quick line drawing and Siouxsie's one of those people. People have always tried to copy that image of her with the black spiky hair, the silent-film-star eyebrows, the white face and red lipstick. But she's always moved ahead. She's like Bowie in that respect. She still looks amazing, still looks like and acts like a star.'

17 & 18 August 2002
Osaka and Tokyo dates close the tour.

Budgie: 'Prior to arriving in Japan, I'd arranged to meet up with Leonard Eto, an amazing drummer and former principal player with the Kodo drummers of Sado. We recorded a session of drumming duets that would provide the basis for the next Creatures album. As a whole, though, the Banshees tour was useful in that it allowed us to step back into that position of where we deserved to be after all those years of hard work. It was a confidence builder, too.'

Sioux: 'But it won't happen again. There are no question marks any more. But in a good way. I'm sure I won't be working with Steven again, though of course I wish him well.

Severin: 'Being in the Banshees has always been about having a life consisting of extremes. Of course there's the drinking and all that, but you have to balance that with the fact that there was tons of really serious, hard work. I never went on stage drunk or high. At the heart of what we've done, there's always been a complete dedication to doing the best we can. There's been a lot of madness around the edges, but at the core of it all there's always been integrity and professionalism.

That's why we were able to triumph over so much of the shit that happened to us.

Sioux: 'We've come to terms with where we are and what we do, and I realised we'd been in this position before. It was – and is – normal. Back in 1977 and half of 1978, the Banshees couldn't get a record deal despite sellout shows and magazine front covers. The industry just wasn't interested. I feel like this is where I belong. Outside. It gives me a focus and a purpose. It's another finger up.'